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ABSTRACT

This training module focuses on the paraprofessional's role in the transition of students with disabilities from school to the adult world. The module is comprised of two components, a facilitator's guide and a student's guide. The facilitator's guide provides the full text of the student's edition as well as chapter goals to be accomplished by students, an outline of topics covered in each text section, materials necessary to teach each chapter (such as transparencies, handouts, and supplemental readings), discussion questions, suggested activities to be completed by students outside of class, and lists of resources (many in Minnesota). Individual chapters cover the following topics: (1) transition from school to adult life; (2) interagency collaboration; (3) roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals; (4) communication and problem solving; (5) assessment and goal setting; (6) student and family involvement; (7) employment; (8) home living; (9) postsecondary education; (10) community participation; and (11) recreation and leisure. Five appendices include an Individualized Education Plan form, information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium, a summary of disability-related legislation, an outline of the personal futures planning process, and a listing of transition resources. (Contains 19 references.) (DB)

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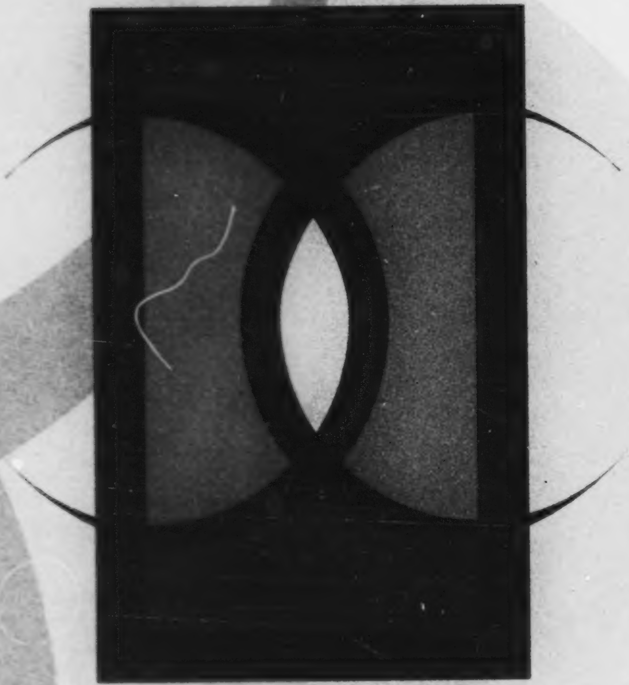

Transition

The Role of the Paraprofessional

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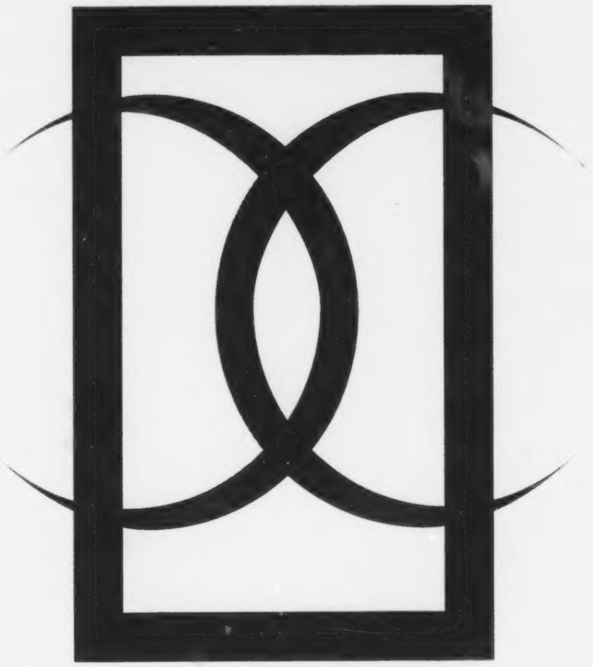

Transition
The Role of the Paraprofessional

Facilitator Edition

Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
The College of Education
& Human Development
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The paraprofessional training module *Transition: The Role of the Paraprofessional* was prepared at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

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Facilitator's Outline

About the Facilitator's Outline

This training module contains a facilitator's outline designed to assist instructors as they plan and prepare to teach the material contained in this module. The outline provides overviews of each chapter which include:

- Chapter goals to be accomplished by students.
- Topics to be covered in each section.
- Discussion questions to facilitate lectures and discussions and activities to be completed by students both in and out of class.

These items are the same as those appearing in the outside margins of the facilitator's edition of this module. The discussion and activity notes, and answers to activity questions, appear in the facilitator's edition only – they do not appear in the students' edition. The text, however, is the same in both. In some cases, the discussions and activities may have been abbreviated in this outline, but provide the same basic information as it appears within the context of the chapter.

This outline can be used when planning lessons. It's a good idea to read through the outline before using it for instruction in order to know what to expect and get a better sense of how the material is tied together.

The content of this module is based on a training series piloted in 1994 by Hutchinson Technical College in Hutchinson, Minnesota. Because of this, many references are specific to Minnesota's school and social service systems. We encourage instructors located in other states to replace the Minnesota-specific information with information more relevant to their state. We hope that facilitators will add their own experiences and stories to make this material "come alive".

Chapter 1

Transition from School to Adult Life

Chapter Goals

Upon completion of this chapter, students should be able to:

- Define and describe transition.
- Recognize and understand the five transition areas that must be addressed in the IEP of each student who receives special education services.
- Discuss why transition planning and services are important.
- List the individuals who must be present in a student's IEP/ transition team.
- List the individuals who must be invited and who may be invited to participate on the IEP/transition team.

Necessary Materials

- Transparencies 1.1, 1.2,1.3, and 1.4
- Overhead projector

Section 1: Transition

Topics Covered

- What is transition?
- Which transition areas must be addressed?
- Why are transition services and planning so important?

Discussion 1

Ask students to share about the environments in which they work.

Discussion 2

Ask the class to share the ways they have been involved in transition-related activities in each of the five transition areas.

Section 2: The Transition Team

Topics Covered

- Who is involved in transition planning?
- Essential members of the transition planning team

Activity 1

Ask students to break into small groups of four or five. Using the IEP team members chart (Transparency 1.4), have students brainstorm ways in which each potential IEP team member could enhance the transition process for a student with disabilities. Ask them to think about what unique perspectives or information each person could bring to the process, or how and why each person should be included in the planning process. After about ten minutes, invite each group to share the ideas they came up with and record their ideas on the chalkboard or overhead projector.

Chapter 2

Interagency Collaboration

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Appreciate the differences between the special education agencies and adult service agencies.
- Understand the importance of collaboration between and among these agencies and service providers in the planning process.
- Recognize adult community service agencies by name and be able to describe what they do.
- Begin thinking of ways to educate your students and their families about available service agencies and options.
- Begin to think of ways to encourage collaboration among agencies, students, parents, teachers and paraprofessionals.

Necessary Materials

- Transparencies 2.1 and 2.2
- Overhead projector

Section 1: Interagency Collaboration

Topics Covered

- Special education system vs. adult services system
- Strategies for building effective interagency partnerships
- Community service agencies and other resources

Discussion 1

Start this section by using Transparency 2.1 to illustrate some of the differences between the special education system and the adult service system. Discuss with students why it's important for both paraprofessionals and students to understand the two systems.

Discussion 2

Discuss the importance of educating students and families about the options available from adult service agencies. With the help of the students, come up with a few strategies to provide information to students and parents. For example, have students prepare interview questions and call potential service providers on the phone. Write them on the board or overhead.

Activity 1

After Discussion 1 is complete, ask the students to break into small groups and brainstorm their own ideas. After 10 to 15 minutes, bring the class back together and have the small groups share their ideas. Write them on the board or overhead.

Activity 2

In small groups, brainstorm ideas that paraprofessionals can appropriately use to involve adult service providers or service representatives in the transition process for students with disabilities. (Examples: Invite a vocational rehabilitation counselor to a student's work site to meet him or her on the job and meet the employer. Or, invite agency representatives into the classroom to discuss their services with the students.) After the groups have met for 10 to 15 minutes, reconvene the class to share the small group's ideas and record them on the board or overhead.

Chapter 3

Roles & Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Develop an appreciation for the many different roles that paraprofessionals can play in the transition process.
- Become familiar with the ethical responsibilities associated with paraprofessional work in transition.

- Recognize situations involving ethical issues and know how to solve or get help with ethical dilemmas.
- Understand the concept of confidentiality and its limits.

Section 1: Roles & Responsibilities

Topics Covered

- Strategies for paraprofessional participation on the team
- Strategies for maintaining professionalism and fulfilling ethical responsibilities
- Common questions about confidentiality
- Confidentiality case study

Discussion 1

Give students a few minutes to read the confidentiality case study then ask them to come up with some different ways that this situation could be handled. Discuss the pros and cons of each alternative.

Activity 1

After discussing the *Confidentiality Case Study*, have students form pairs to role play the scenario using one or two of the strategies that the class came up with during their discussion.

Chapter 4

Communication & Problem Solving

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Become familiar with what it means to have an assertive communication style as opposed to a passive or aggressive communication style.
- Develop an awareness of their own social skills and communication style.
- Become familiar with some of the elements that foster clear communication between teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Become familiar with a formalized problem solving technique.
- Begin utilizing problem-solving techniques in approaching real-life situations.

Necessary Materials

- Transparencies 4.1 and 4.2
- Overhead projector

Section 1: Effective Communication

Topics Covered

- Communications styles
- *Paraprofessional Communication and Social Skills Inventory*
- Strategies for communicating with teachers

Discussion 1

Use Transparency 4.1 to discuss the three styles of communication. Ask students to share ways that they think these different styles could affect their effectiveness on the job.

Activity 1

Have students form groups of four to six people. Have them think of a problem that they might encounter with a teacher at their school. Then ask them to role play ways in which the problem could be addressed using passive, aggressive, and assertive communication styles. Instruct them to rotate roles so that everyone has a chance to participate as well as observe. After 10 or 15 minutes, ask the class members to share some of their experiences from the small groups.

Activity 2

Explain that the *Paraprofessional Communication and Social Skills Inventory* is designed to help them assess their own strengths and weaknesses. Ask them to take some time to fill in the inventory. Invite them to share some ways that they might actively attempt to improve in areas in which they feel they aren't currently very strong.

Section 2: Solving Problems

Topics Covered

- Problem-solving strategies

Activity 1

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the scenarios outlined in this section. After the groups have had time to develop some strategies, have them share their ideas with the rest of the class. If you have time, use one of the scenarios from Activity 1 (in conjunction with Transparency 4.2) to go through the problem-solving strategy step by step. Emphasize that using this strategy helps break the problem-solving process into manageable steps.

Chapter 5

Assessment & Goal Setting

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Become familiar with standardized testing, behavioral checklists, and functional assessments.
- Understand what is meant by "objective observation."
- Report behaviors in a manner that is both observable and measurable.
- Be familiar with some ways observations are recorded.
- Understand the distinction between goals and objectives.
- Be familiar with developing objectives that include the three components of behavior, criteria, and conditions.

Necessary Materials

- Transparencies 5.1 and 5.2
- Overhead projector

Section 1: Assessment

Topics Covered

- Three ways to carry out assessment

Activity 1

Write each of the three types of assessment on the board. Ask the students to name some advantages and disadvantages of each assessment approach. As they list them, write them below the appropriate group. When you feel you have generated enough input from the class, have a short discussion about which methods give the most information for transition planning with students with disabilities.

Section 2: Observing & Recording Data

Topics Covered

- Recording your observations

Discussion 1

Discuss what it means to be objective in one's observations. Emphasize, in particular, that reported behaviors should be both observable and measurable. If you have time, ask the class to generate some behavioral scenarios and then report the scenarios in both an appropriate and inappropriate fashion.

Section 3: Setting Transition Goals & Objectives

Topics Covered

- Goals
- Objectives
- Examples of transition goals and objectives

Discussion 1

Use Transparency 5.2 to lead a discussion on goals and objectives. Have students come up with examples of goals and objectives. Write them on the board or overhead. Have the class identify the behavior, criteria, and condition for each example.

Activity 1

Break the class into small groups and ask them to underline the behavior, criteria, and conditions in each of the four examples of transition goals and objectives given in the chapter. Also ask them to write an additional objective for each example.

Chapter 6

Student & Family Involvement

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Begin to build a set of strategies and resources that will help students to be involved in their own transition planning.
- Develop some insight into the types of activities in which students might need to participate to ensure their successful transition.
- Develop an awareness of the types of student/paraprofessional interaction that encourage self-determination.
- Develop or heighten your appreciation for the diversity of ways in which students experience a sense of family.
- Gain an understanding of the many roles that parents play in the transition of their sons and daughters.
- Understand some of the ways that you can offer support to students and their families during transition planning and implementation.

Necessary Materials

- Transparencies 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3
- Overhead projector

Section 1: Student Involvement in Transition Planning

Topics Covered

- The paraprofessional's role
- What students want and need
- How to involve students in transition planning

Discussion 1

Take some time to discuss the close relationship that often exists between the paraprofessional and the student. Have students come up with examples of how this relationship can be beneficial for students. You may also want to ask students to help you build a list of potential problems associated with this type of relationship (e.g., learned helplessness, the paraprofessional as a counselor, etc.).

Section 2: Self-Determination

Topics Covered

- The paraprofessional's role
- Paraprofessional strategies

Activity 1

Break the class into small groups. Have them discuss strategies that might help a student who has become very dependent on a paraprofessional's support to advocate for him or herself. When the class reconvenes, have them share some of their ideas as you write them on the board or overhead.

Section 3: Family Involvement

Topics Covered

- What is a family?
- What families want and need
- Appreciating diversity
- Respecting the grief cycle
- Roles parents play in transition planning

Discussion 1

As part of your discussion about the importance of involving families in the transition process, use Transparency 6.1 to begin a discussion of the family. Ask students to offer their ideas about what makes a family. List them on the board as they are verbalized.

Discussion 2

Examine the different types of fear that families may experience when their child begins the journey into adulthood. Ask students if they can think of other fears that might be present. Can they think of ways to overcome those fears?

Discussion 3

Summarize the roles that parents can play in transition planning. If you have time, ask students to suggest additional "tips" under each role.

Activity 1

Write the following two headings on the board or overhead: *Roles played by mother* and *Roles played by father*. Ask the students to call out as many additional roles as they can think of. (These might include nurturer, bus driver, housekeeper, and so on.)

Chapter 7
Employment

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Understand the concept of natural supports in the work environment.
- Become familiar with the concept of job coaching.
- Become familiar with career exploration and work experience options that may be available to their students.
- Begin to develop strategies to assist in helping your students explore career options and develop and apply job skills.
- Understand the concept of job carving.
- List some of the characteristics that often determine the quality of a particular job for a person who has a disability.

Necessary Materials

- Transparencies 7.1, 7.2
- Overhead projector

Section 1: The Transition to Employment

Topics Covered

- The paraprofessional's role
- Case studies
- Paraprofessional strategies
- Available experience options
- How jobs are developed for students with disabilities
- Job carving
- Characteristics of a "quality" job

Discussion 1

Discuss career exploration and work experience by going over some of the options available.

Discussion 2

Discuss with students the steps involved in creating some jobs. Let the students know that job development is usually done by work experience coordinators, vocational education teachers and other school staff. But, if they are working with employers and students at the job work site, they may have a chance to get involved in these activities. Discuss the idea of "job carving."

Activity 1

After the students have read the case studies, have them work in small groups to discuss how natural job supports could be used to decrease the support required from the job coach and increase the student's independence. After 10 to 15 minutes, have the students share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Chapter 8

Home Living

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Develop an appreciation of the complexity and individual nature of a student's home living preferences and needs.
- Become familiar with some of the many home living options that may be available to your students.
- Learn some strategies to assist you in supporting students as they learn home living skills.

Necessary Materials

- Transparency 8.1
- Overhead projector

Topics Covered

- The paraprofessional's role
- Available home living options
- Supporting students as they learn home living skills

Discussion 1

Lead a discussion on the areas involved in choosing and caring for a home. Emphasize the importance of students making home living choices as independently as possible.

Activity 1

Have each student make a list of all the activities they must complete in order to function each day (shower, brush teeth, etc.). Instruct them to start with the moment they get up and end with the last thing they accomplish before they go to bed at night. After taking 5 to 10 minutes to complete the list, ask the class members to respond to the following questions:

- What would happen if these things weren't done?
- How do these activities help you to have a successful day?
- Which of these activities would a young adult need to learn to be successful in living independently?
- How could a young adult learn these things?

Chapter 9

Postsecondary Education

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Acquire strategies in the areas of understanding strengths and limitations, self-advocacy, social interactions, self-monitoring, time management, study skills, and problem solving to assist students in preparation for postsecondary education
- Recognize and be able to generate appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities entering postsecondary settings.
- Be familiar with common education and training options available to students after high school.

Necessary Materials

- Transparency 9.1
- Overhead projector

Topics Covered

- The paraprofessional's role
- Paraprofessional strategies in planning for postsecondary education and training
- Accommodations for students in postsecondary education and training settings
- Postsecondary training and education options for students with disabilities

Activity 1

Using the accommodations in this section as a guide, have students form small groups to brainstorm other accommodations that might be helpful to students in each of the three categories. When they're finished, bring the class back together and write their suggestions, underneath the tree headings, on the board or overhead.

Chapter 10

Community Participation

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Begin to develop some strategies for teaching students how to access their community in the areas of transportation, financial planning, medical and dental care, and consumer awareness.

Necessary Materials

- Transparency 10.1
- Overhead projector

Topics Covered

- The paraprofessional's role
- Paraprofessional strategies regarding transportation, medical and dental care, consumer awareness, and financial planning

Discussion 1

Lead a discussion on various aspects of community participation. Ask students to come up with additional areas that might fall under the topic of "community participation."

Chapter 11

Recreation & Leisure

Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Understand the distinctions between inclusive and accessible recreation, integrated recreation and systematic supports, and adaptive and "special" recreation.
- Begin to develop a set of strategies to assist students plan and implement their transition into adult recreational activity.

Necessary Materials

- Transparency 11.1
- Overhead projector

Topics Covered

- The paraprofessional's role
- Three types of recreation and leisure options
- Paraprofessional strategies

Section 1: Planning for Recreation & Leisure Options

Discussion 1

Summarize the three types of recreation options, as well as the various settings in which people might enjoy each. As you present this material, stress the importance of recreation in natural settings and including individuals with disabilities in activities where they are in contact with individuals without disabilities.

Activity 1

This activity might be called *Your Leisure Geography* or *Close to Home or Far Away, There are Many Wonderful Places to Play.* Write the following headings on the board or overhead:

- Close to home (within walking/wheeling distance)
- Short car/bus ride (5–15 minutes maximum)
- Long car/bus ride (over 15 minutes)
- Great distance away (over 100 miles)

Have students break into small groups and generate at least four places in each category where people go to enjoy their leisure time. Reconvene the class and write the ideas that they generated on the board. If possible, comment on the diversity of content that each group arrived at. This is a small indication of the individual nature of what people consider recreative.

Introduction

An Introduction to the Curriculum

The need for paraprofessionals to work with persons who have disabilities has been growing in recent years. Increasing numbers of persons with a range of disabilities are now living in small residential settings in our communities, attending regular classes in neighborhood schools, holding jobs in local businesses, and participating in community recreation and social activities. There is a great need for paraprofessionals to provide the services and supports these individuals need for community living.

By employing paraprofessionals, educational and other services for persons with disabilities are able to expand and improve the quality of assistance they provide. Some of the benefits paraprofessionals offer schools, agencies, and individuals with disabilities are the following:

- Expanded learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- More individualized instruction.
- Increased planning time for educators, supervisors, and others.
- Better monitoring and evaluation of persons with disabilities.
- Greater consistency in services.
- Improved parent-school relationships.
- Greater involvement of persons with disabilities in education and other settings in the community at large.
- Increased transportation assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Expanded vocational skill development for individuals with disabilities.

The Role of Today's Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals who work with individuals with disabilities have a variety of roles and definitions, depending on the environment in which they work. For example, one definition of educational paraprofessionals includes the following:

A paraprofessional is an employee:

- Whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct services to individuals and/or their parents.
- Who works under the supervision of a professional staff member who is responsible for the overall management of the program area including the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and the individual's progress.

To the Facilitator

Be sure to have current state legislation, definitions, and guidelines to share with participants. They should be familiar with the resources existing to support their work.

Paraprofessionals provide services in the following areas:

- Educational programs
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Recreation programs
- Early intervention and preschool programs
- Social work/case management
- Parent training/child-find programs
- Vocational training programs and job coaching
- Community programs
- Transition and school-to-work

Paraprofessionals are typically different from professionals in the amount of education, certification required for the job, degree of responsibility, and extent of supervision required.

Because the support of paraprofessionals is so essential to the success of individuals with disabilities, this module is dedicated to improving and enhancing skills for paraprofessionals.

Information in *The Role of Today's Paraprofessional* adapted from: Pickett, A.L. (1997). Paraeducators in school settings: Framing the issues. In Pickett, A.L. & Gerlach, K. (Eds.) *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach* (page 4). Austin, TX: PRO-ED. Copyright 1997 by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted and reprinted by permission.

Activity 1

Have students get in groups to discuss their experiences in paraprofessional roles and the changes they have seen. Those students who haven't worked as paraprofessionals can share their beliefs about para roles. Organizing the groups to include both types of participants will increase understanding of the type of roles paraprofessionals have.

About the Module

Whether you have years of experience working with persons who have disabilities or are just beginning, there are probably many questions you have about the role of a paraprofessional. Some concerns and questions will be very specific to your work setting, while others will be more general. This module will cover both.

This curriculum is primarily for paraprofessionals who are (or will be) working in educational settings (i.e., special and general education). It will, however, also be useful for those in direct service settings, such as vocational programs and residential settings.

The training you are about to begin will not only address the current reality for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities, but more importantly, the challenges for the future in your career as a paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals aren't expected to have a total understanding of all the concepts in these modules, but the paraprofessional who has a working knowledge of these core concepts will be most effective.

Philosophy and Key Beliefs

This module was developed using a general philosophy including six key beliefs for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities. Those beliefs include:

- The individual with a disability is the ultimate locus of control and is the most important member in the decision-making process.
- The family is the other primary locus of control. Family involvement is essential in any decision-making process.
- The team concept is essential in setting up a plan with an individual. This team includes the individual, the family, and all those working with the individual, including the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional is an essential link between what is and what can be for the individual. The best follow-through on any plan comes from teamwork.
- The community should be the basis for all training, as much as possible. This means that, whether offering real-life examples in the classroom or working in real life situations in the community, the focus must be on the most natural setting and support possible. This is essential so the individual can make connections between what is being learned on a daily basis and the real world. This will help the individual generalize the experience to similar situations in his or her life.
- Inclusion is the goal. This means that individuals with disabilities should be included in the mainstream of society – work, school, and recreation. Devotion to such a model will create the most positive results for the individuals and society as a whole. Inclusion suggests that we can and will all benefit by learning to work and live side by side with each other.
- The most effective paraprofessional will be the individual who has a good self-esteem and is able to be assertive. The assertive paraprofessional is able to ask for support and guidance from staff.

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

The Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium has recently developed and published some important information related to paraprofessionals, including new legislation, guiding principles, and core and specialized competencies. This information can be found in Appendix B at the back of this module. While some of the information is specific to Minnesota, much of it is applicable to paraprofessionals across the country.

Discussion 1

Review with students the information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium, found in Appendix B. Be sure to discuss the new core competencies and how paraprofessionals can incorporate them into their daily work lives.

After the Training

You will leave this training with more information about paraprofessionals than you had when you started. It's important to remember that no matter how much knowledge you have about your job, the individuals you work with are your greatest trainers. Each one is unique and has his or her own interests and needs. The greatest responsibility you have is to listen to those interests and needs, remember what you have learned, ask what is needed, and use that information in your working relationship and responsibilities.

Therefore, use this training as a basis and build your skills from this point, drawing upon each setting and individual. Whether consumer, student, teacher, supervisor, principal, director, or superintendent, you will learn from each. With each setting and situation, your confidence, ability, and skills will continue to grow. Remember, this training is only as good as the degree to which you use what you learn; seek assistance so you can "do what you know."

1

Chapter One

Transition from School to Adult Life

1 **Introduction**
1 **Section 1 Transition**
4 **Section 2 The Transition Team**
5 **Summary**
6 **Questions to Ponder**

Introduction

More than ever, school districts across the country are turning to paraprofessionals to help them meet the rising educational demands placed on educators and students. Consequently, paraprofessionals are facing new challenges and taking on more responsibilities. Long gone are the days of sitting in the back of the classroom monitoring student behavior and keeping records. Today's paraprofessionals are teaming up with educators and service providers to work directly with students both in and out of the classroom (Pickett, 1993).

Nowhere is the role of the paraprofessional more important or visible than in the lives of students with disabilities who are planning their transition from school to adult life. To prepare for life after high school, many students are spending a considerable part of their school day in community settings. Through real-life, hands-on experiences, students are gaining the skills they will need to live and work independently in their communities. The shift to community, experiential learning has created exciting opportunities for paraprofessionals to support students outside of the traditional school environment. This chapter will define and outline the transition process and illustrate the importance of individualized transition services for students with disabilities.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define and describe transition.
- Recognize and understand the five transition areas that must be addressed in the IEP of each student who receives special education services.
- Discuss why transition planning and services are important.
- List the individuals who must be present in a student's IEP/transition team.
- List the individuals who must be invited and who may be invited to participate on the IEP/transition team.

Section 1

Transition

What is Transition?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, PL 101-476) defines transition as:

> ...a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement

Discussion 1

Ask students to share a little about the environments in which they work.

Show Transparency 1.1

from school to post-school activities including:

- Post-secondary education.
- Vocational training.
- Integrated employment (including supported employment).
- Continuing and adult education.
- Adult services.
- Independent living (home living).
- Community participation.
- Recreation and leisure.

According to this federal definition, transition services must be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. Services may include instruction, community experience, and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives. When appropriate, services should also include help with the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Minnesota law takes the federal law a step further, requiring that all students receiving special education services must have individually based transition goals and objectives written into their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by age fourteen. (See the sample IEP in Appendix A.)

Minnesota transition law states:

> ...students' needs and the special education instruction and services to be provided shall be agreed upon through the development of an individual education plan (IEP). The plan shall address the student's need to develop skills to live and work as independently as possible within the community. By grade nine or age fourteen, the plan must include a statement of the needed transition services, including a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages or both before secondary services are concluded.
>
> (Minnesota Statute 120.17)

For additional information, see the additional disability-related legislation located in Appendix C.

Discussion 2

Ask the class to share ways they have been involved in transition-related activities in each of the five transition areas.

Show Transparency 1.2

Which Transition Areas Must be Addressed?

There are five transition areas that must be assessed and included in the IEPs of all students aged fourteen and over in Minnesota who receive special education services. Individualized goals and related objectives are required for students in each of the following transition areas:

- **Community participation:** Accessing community resources including people, places, and activities in the community.
- **Home living:** Developing necessary skills to live as independently as possible.

- **Recreation and leisure:** Knowing about and experiencing social and free-time activities.
- **Jobs and job training:** Developing employment skills.
- **Postsecondary training and education:** Developing skills to access life-long learning opportunities

Why are Transition Services & Planning So Important?

Transition planning has traditionally been thought of as "how to prepare young people for the world of work." While job training and experiences are important, they are only one component in the transition process. Effective transition planning looks beyond just employment and takes a "whole life" approach. It is a future plan for life. By looking at all aspects of a person's life — where they will live, work, and socialize — students leave school better prepared to face the challenges of adult life. Successful transition planning identifies the individual needs of the person first and then designs a plan accordingly.

Here are some statistics to illustrate the importance of and need for transition planning:

Show Transparency 1.3

- Between 250,000 and 300,000 special education learners leave school annually. Many have needs for ongoing community services (U.S. Department of Education).
- Between 50–75% of adults with disabilities are unemployed. This is over eight times the rate of people without disabilities (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights).
- Only one in four of those adults with disabilities who work do so full time, with underemployment remaining a problem (Harris Poll, 1986).
- Individuals with disabilities earn much less than individuals who don't have disabilities (Census Data, 1980).
- Thirty-eight percent of individuals with disabilities said they are undereducated and have no marketable skills (Harris Poll, 1986).

These statistics underscore the importance of transition planning for students with disabilities. It's imperative that students, with the support of their families, teachers, and other important people in their lives, take an active step to ensure that they leave school with the skills they need to lead satisfying and healthy adult lives.

Section 2

The Transition Team

Who is Involved in Transition Planning?

No one person, school, or agency is solely responsible for transition planning. Effective transition planning takes place through the collaborative efforts of many people who make up a transition planning team. This team includes the student, his or her family, school administrators, teachers, rehabilitation counselors, county case managers, community service providers, and other important people in a student's life. Paraprofessionals may also be asked to participate on a transition team which meets regularly and is responsible for seeing that all students aged fourteen or older, who receive special education services, have transition goals and objectives written into their IEPs.

Show Transparency 1.4

Essential Members of an IEP/Transition Planning Team

The following individuals must be present:

- An administrator or administrative designee. The administrator may be the school principal or director of special education; an administrative designee may be a special educator authorized by the principal to commit district resources.
- The student's regular education teacher. An appropriate regular classroom teacher must be present even when the student has no regular education placement.
- A special education teacher holding the license of the student's primary disability.

The following individuals must be invited:

- The student must be invited to his or her IEP/transition planning meeting. Students should always be involved in their transition planning process and encouraged to attend their own meetings.
- One or both parents of the student must also be invited to any meeting where transition services will be discussed, and they must be informed that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss transition planning. The school must also tell the parents that the student is invited and identify other agency personnel who will be invited. In all cases it's the responsibility of the district to communicate with the parents in their primary language, including sign language.
- A member of the assessment team must be invited. This may be the student's teacher, a representative of the district, or

some other person who is knowledgeable about the assessment procedures used with the student.

The following individuals may be invited to attend, as appropriate:

- Paraprofessionals who work one-on-one with the student at school and/or in the community.
- Related service providers such as an occupational therapist, physical therapist, audiologist, psychologist, adaptive physical educator, doctor or nurse, rehabilitation counselor, or social worker.
- Representatives of non-school agencies such as a Division of Rehabilitation Services counselor, county case manager, health care provider, residential service provider, supported employment service provider, community leisure service provider, community education representative, or post-secondary education support service facilitator. Involving these individuals early will greatly improve the student's ability to successfully access adult services when they leave school and are no longer entitled to special education services.
- Other individuals at the discretion of the parents and student. For example, a parent or student may invite a person who is a member of the same minority or cultural background, or someone knowledgeable about a student's race, culture, or disabilities. A peer or friend may be able to relate to the student at a student level and support the student's goals. Parents and students need to be informed of their right to bring anyone they choose to the meeting.

Adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work* (p. 12). St. Paul, Minnesota: Author.

Summary

This chapter introduced you to the concepts of transition and transition planning. You have probably begun to think about your role as a paraprofessional in the transition process.

When you're working with students, it may be helpful to think of transition in terms of the five areas that need to be addressed in the IEP of every student who receives special education services. Viewing transition in terms of community participation, home living, recreation and leisure, jobs and job training, and post-secondary training and education underscores the importance and breadth of the transition process for your students.

Many facts and statistics illustrating the importance of providing quality transition planning and services are available. The transition process provides many opportunities for paraprofessionals to make an important positive impact.

Activity 1

Ask students to break into small groups of four or five. Using the IEP team members chart (Transparency 1.4), have students brainstorm ways in which each potential IEP team member could enhance the transition process for a student with disabilities. Ask them to think about what unique perspectives or information each person could bring to the process, or how and why each person should be included in the planning process. After about 10 minutes, invite each group to share their ideas and record their ideas on the chalkboard or overhead projector.

Effective transition planning is best done through the collaborative efforts of a transition team. This team must always include the administrator (or an administrator's designee) and the student's regular and special education teachers. The student, the student's parent(s), and a member of the student's assessment team must also be invited to participate but don't necessarily have to be present at team meetings. Many others, including paraprofessionals, may be invited when appropriate.

Questions to Ponder

- Spend some time thinking about your own transition from school to adult life. What parts of the transition process were most difficult for you?
- Were there times during your own transition when you may have benefited from the help of a teacher or paraprofessional?
- Think about the unique and important contribution that you as a paraprofessional might make to the transition planning process.
- As a paraprofessional, you may not automatically be invited to participate on the IEP/transition planning team. Can you think of situations where it would be important to let the team know you would like to participate?

2

Chapter Two

Interagency Collaboration

7 **Introduction**
7 **Section 1 Interagency Collaboration**
13 **Summary**
14 **Questions to Ponder**

Introduction

Understanding and accessing the adult service provider system is one of the most confusing aspects of transition planning for students with disabilities. Adult service agencies provide a variety of employment, financial, independent living, housing, and recreation services to adults with disabilities. These agencies operate under different rules, regulations, and eligibility criteria than the special education system.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Appreciate the differences between the special education agencies and adult service agencies.
- Understand the importance of collaboration between and among these agencies and service providers in the planning process.
- Recognize adult community service agencies by name and be able to describe what they do.
- Begin thinking of ways to educate your students and their families about available service agencies and options.
- Begin to think of ways to encourage collaboration among agencies, students, parents, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

Section 1

Interagency Collaboration

Special Education System vs. Adult Service System

Show Transparency 2.1

The following chart illustrates some of the main differences between the school and adult service delivery systems.

Special Education	Adult System
Services are required for all individuals identified as having a disability.	Services are not required; having a disability does not guarantee services.
No waiting lists allowed.	Long waiting lists may exist.
Individually based services; narrow eligibility criteria and school services may exist.	One provider delivers all services.
Some services may not be available.	Many agencies may deliver services to a single student.

Chart adapted with permission from Colorado Department of Education. (1993). *Colorado transition manual* (p.137). Denver, CO: Author.

Discussion 1

Start this section by using Transparency 2.1 to illustrate some of the differences between the special education system and the adult service system. Discuss with students why it's important for both paraprofessionals and students to understand the two systems.

As one can see from the chart, adult service representatives must be involved in transition planning to ensure that students receive services. Non-school agencies, community resources, and other service providers (e.g., vocational rehabilitation counselor, county case manager, employers) should be invited to participate in transition planning at least two years before the student is ready to graduate. Schools must provide students and their families with information on post-school options and resources. This information will allow them make informed decisions regarding who should be involved in their transition planning.

Strategies for Building Interagency Partnerships

School staff have a responsibility to build effective partnerships between schools and non-school agencies and resources. The following is a partial list of activities that will help to create and maintain a collaborative environment:

- School staff should invite other community services and agencies, as appropriate, to participate in individualized transition planning.
- School staff and other community services and agencies should develop procedures to define roles, coordinate services, and negotiate services and supports.
- School staff should learn the eligibility criteria, referral procedures, and structures of various agencies.
- School staff should share relevant information about transition planning needs with other community services and agencies.
- School staff should participate in cooperative training with other community services and agencies.
- School staff should participate on local transition planning committees with other agencies and services.
- School staff should establish interagency agreements with other agencies and services regarding program purpose, cooperation in attending planning meetings, and commitments to deliver services.
- School staff should participate in community awareness activities regarding transition services.

The material in *Strategies for Building Interagency Partnerships* adapted with permission from Bates, P. (1990). *'Best practices in transition planning: Quality indicators.* Carbondale: Illinois Transition Project.

Community Service Agencies

Show Transparency 2.2

It will help you to become familiar with service agencies in your area that may potentially be involved in the transition process. The following section lists several agencies and outlines their responsibilities.

Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

An individual may be able to get vocational rehabilitation services if he or she has a disability that makes it hard to get training or find a job. To find out if an individual is eligible for services, a DRS counselor will look at medical and school records. The individual and his or her DRS counselor will then identify the person's assets and limitations and what support is needed. As part of the individual's transition plan, an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) will be developed. DRS provides many services, some of which include:

- Assessment to determine individual needs.
- Guidance in choosing, preparing for, and finding suitable employment.
- Individual vocational counseling during rehabilitation and on the job.
- Assistive technology to increase an individual's ability to work, such as adapted equipment or worksite modifications.
- Vocational training after high school to prepare for employment; this may include tuition, fees, books, and supplies for education in a college, university, trade school, or on-the-job training.
- Assistance with added costs incurred because of a rehabilitation plan.
- Job placement assistance.
- Job-related tools and licenses for individuals who are ready to go to work.

Centers for Independent Living (CIL)

Independent living is often overlooked in the transition-planning process; however, all students need to know how to access support for future living arrangements. Centers for Independent Living can assist students in identifying individual goals in a wide variety of areas: socialization, housing, attendant management, financial management, transportation, sexuality, food preparation, community resources, recreation and leisure activities, health care, peer support, employment and educational opportunities, safety, self-advocacy, individual rights, and time management. The team needs to get information about these resources early in the transition planning process.

State Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (SSB)

If an individual has a visual impairment, with or without additional physical or mental disabilities, SSB can offer assistance in transition planning. An SSB counselor can be part of a student's transition planning team and can assist in creating a transition plan. Some of the services available from SSB include:

- Adjustment to blindness, including orientation and mobility training and rehabilitation counseling.

- Low vision services.
- Counseling.
- Assistance in finding and keeping a job.
- Tools and supplies needed to reach goals.
- Telecommunication and sensory aids.
- Vocational training.

County Social Services

County social services play a crucial role in assisting individuals in meeting a variety of essential daily needs, such as housing, employment, financial support, health care, and transportation. County case managers are the key to accessing these services and supports. The case manager can determine eligibility for services, help identify which services are needed, seek out appropriate services, and coordinate service delivery. Direction for the case manager's involvement comes from a person's Individual Service Plan (ISP). County social services are available in the categories of developmental disabilities, mental health, hearing impairments, and general assistance. Some of the services that may be provided by county social services include:

- Case management to individuals eligible to receive services such as Intermediate Care Facilities for people with mental retardation (ICF/MR), home- and community-based services, semi-independent living services, day training and habilitation services, employment services and support, and mental health services.
- General relief programs, which provide financial assistance to people who need support, are temporarily disabled, and can't qualify under the Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) of the Social Security Administration.
- Medical assistance programs which seeks to provide medical assistance to individuals without health insurance and who qualify for state-funded assistance.
- The food stamp program for people qualifying under income, living arrangement, and maximum-resources requirements.

Private Industry Council – Job Training Partnership Act

The Private Industry Council is a local committee that helps govern the implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The JTPA is a program to enlist employers as partners in vocational training programs; the program can include both work experience and on-the-job training. Activities that occur during transition planning for eligible individuals may include:

- On-the-job training conducted in the work environment to assist the trainee to learn a specific occupation through demonstration and practice.

- Customized training, which often includes classroom education as well as on-the-job training, designed to meet the individual's needs.
- Job search assistance in a small group setting, which could include working on interviewing techniques, resume preparation, uncovering job leads and instruction regarding keeping a job.

Rehabilitation Facilities/Day Training & Habilitation Centers

Both of these types of services require referral from another agency, usually the Division of Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, or county social services. Activities that occur during transition planning for eligible individuals may include:

- Vocational evaluation and counseling.
- Training in daily living, work, and personal or social skills.
- Adult basic education.
- Job placement and follow up.

Employers

Employers can assist during the transition-planning process by:

- Providing information on a student's work habits and skill levels (if the student is working) or information for a student and family on the skills needed for certain kinds of work.
- Offering job sites for training or placement and becoming integrally involved in a student's learning.
- Offering their expertise at "career days" and as guest speakers.
- Encouraging other employers to hire and train students with disabilities.

Advocacy Services

Advocacy services may be available from a number of sources, such as PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights), local Arcs (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens), LDM (Learning Disabilities of Minnesota), the Centers for Independent Living, or the Minnesota Disability Law Center (Legal Advocacy). Services may include:

- Providing advocates for people with disabilities.
- Involvement with legislation affecting people with disabilities.
- Information and referrals regarding potential services.
- Investigation and intervention.
- Legislative support for lawyers who have clients with disabilities.

Discussion 2

Discuss the importance of educating students and families about the options available from adult service agencies. With the help of the students, come up with a few strategies to provide information to students and parents. For example, have students prepare interview questions and call potential service providers on the phone. Write them on the board or overhead.

Activity 1

After Discussion 1 is complete, ask the students to break into small groups and brainstorm their own ideas. After 10 to 15 minutes, bring the class back together and have the small groups share their ideas. Write them on the board or overhead.

Activity 2

In small groups, brainstorm ideas that paraprofessionals can appropriately use to involve adult service providers or service representatives in the transition process for students with disabilities. (Examples: Invite a vocational rehabilitation counselor to a student's work site to meet him or her on the job and meet the employer. Or, invite agency representatives into the classroom to discuss their services with the students.) After the groups have met for 10 to 15 minutes, reconvene the class to share the small group's ideas and record them on the blackboard or overhead.

Postsecondary Schools

Postsecondary education can be pursued in public and private colleges, universities, community colleges, technical colleges, and business and trade schools. Most postsecondary schools have staff specifically assigned to counsel students with disabilities. Some schools work closely with high schools to provide training during the final years of high school. During the transition-planning process, postsecondary support staff can provide information on survival skills, the application process, and support services offered by the institution.

Community Members

Students are first and foremost members of their communities — the places where they work and live, and the people that they know and care about. Therefore, the involvement of community members in the transition process is natural and logical. Communities should be supported in learning about the needs of their citizens with disabilities, and then be expected to include citizens with disabilities in community services, transportation, economic development, housing, recreation and leisure activities, clubs, organizations, etc. People from places of worship, social security, community education, and local councils can be recruited to be part of IEP teams.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI is a federally funded program for U.S. citizens who have disabilities or blindness. To be considered a "disability," the condition must keep the person from "substantial, gainful employment." Generally, any income earned from work amounting to over five hundred dollars a month is considered "substantial, gainful employment" and SSI eligibility monies may be affected, although there are exclusions that can be made that enhance an individual's actual monthly amount. It's important to add that not all income and/or resources are used in determining eligibility. One should apply for SSI one month prior to his or her eighteenth birthday. An individual should work with a representative from Social Security to determine specific benefits. Incentives are available for those who go to work. If a person qualifies for SSI, he or she automatically qualifies for Medical Assistance.

Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)

MSA provides additional financial assistance if SSI and/or employment do not meet living expenses. Eligibility is determined by low income and resources, and monthly benefits differ according to individual need. Applications for MSA can be made at a county department of human services or welfare office. One should note that if a person qualifies for MSA, he or she automatically qualifies for Medical Assistance.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

SSDI is also a federally funded financial assistance program falling under the auspices of the Social Security Administration. To qualify for this program, a person must have worked for a period of time before becoming disabled. A person can also be eligible for SSDI if his or her parents receive Social Security benefits or if the parents have applied for benefits. The death of a parent may also make an individual eligible to receive SSDI. The monthly benefit amount is determined by the wages earned prior to becoming disabled or the earnings made by the parents.

Other Resources

A number of other resources exist that may be useful in the IEP/transition-planning process. For example, a representative from the Social Security office can provide application forms and information regarding rules and regulations for people with disabilities. Mental health centers can provide evaluations and support through therapy, counseling, and consultation. The State Job Service offices provide job listings and can help with making applications and employer contacts. An array of health services such as family planning, nutrition, personal health care, prenatal care, and assistance with ongoing health issues can be provided by public health nurses or other health care providers. Depending on the individual student, representatives from these agencies may be included on the IEP/transition planning team.

Information in *Community Service Agencies* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work.* (p.12). St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

This chapter stresses the importance of understanding and appreciating the many differences between the ways one accesses the adult services system as opposed to the special education system. It's important to include representatives from the adult service system in the transition-planning process. These representatives should be invited to participate at least two years before a student is scheduled to graduate.

The success of the transition process can often depend on the ability to build effective partnerships between schools and non-school agencies and resources. Paraprofessionals are encouraged to become familiar with the range of community service agencies and other resources that may be in a position to help a student make a smooth and successful transition from the school environment. After becoming familiar with the adult service system, it's important to find creative ways to bring teachers, students, parents, and paraprofessionals together with adult service providers to participate in the planning process.

Questions to Ponder

- Are some of the agencies that were outlined in this chapter unfamiliar to you? What are some ways that you could educate yourself about available services in your area?
- What strategies have you used or seen used to build interagency partnerships? What worked well? What could have been done differently?
- Why is it important to build linkages with adult services when assisting a student with his or her transition preparation?

Chapter Three

3

Roles & Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

15 **Introduction**
15 **Section 1 Roles & Responsibilities**
18 **Summary**
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Introduction

Paraprofessionals' roles vary greatly depending on the students and professionals with whom they work, as well as the environments in which their responsibilities are carried out. A paraprofessional in a vocational program, for example, will likely spend most of the day with students in community work sites. Paraprofessionals who stay in school all day are much more involved with teachers and students in the classroom. Regardless of their roles, paraprofessionals enhance the learning process for students by creating more time and flexibility for teachers to plan and implement instruction. In addition to supporting teachers, paraprofessionals play an important role with students – offering one-on-one attention that regular and special educators may not be able to provide (Pickett, 1993).

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Develop an appreciation for the many different roles that paraprofessionals can play in the transition process.
- Become familiar with the ethical responsibilities associated with paraprofessional work in transition.
- Recognize situations involving ethical issues and know how to solve or get help with ethical dilemmas.
- Understand the concept of confidentiality and its limits.

Section 1

Roles & Responsibilities

As representatives of a school district, paraprofessionals are expected to uphold certain professional and ethical standards. Most importantly, paraprofessionals must respect the human rights of the students, families, and colleagues with whom they work. Maintaining confidentiality regarding the personal matters of students and families is of utmost importance. Paraprofessionals should become familiar with their school's policies and procedures regarding students' rights to privacy. It's important to note, however, that if a student's safety or well-being is in jeopardy, that information should be reported to the school professional who has ultimate responsibility for that student (Pickett, 1993).

Strategies for Paraprofessional Participation on the Transition Team

The following list represents some of the ways that paraprofessionals can participate in the transition planning process and roles that they may play on the transition team:

- Consult regularly with teachers about student performance during community and vocational training.
- Participate in IEP and transition-planning meetings for individual students.
- Instruct and supervise individual and small groups of students in classrooms, community learning environments, and work sites.
- Use effective social, communication, and problem-solving skills to help students learn self-confidence and self-reliance, and achieve as much autonomy as possible.
- Use appropriate instructional strategies to help students learn skills required to live and work in the community.
- Collaborate with IEP team members when writing transition goals.
- Analyze tasks and develop teaching sequences.
- Use functional assessment instruments (checklists, duration/ frequency charts, etc.).
- Collect and record data about student performance.
- Maintain records required by the district or employers.
- Implement behavior-management strategies established for individual students.
- Provide parents and other caregivers with information and assistance they can use to gain access to resources and support services for their child.
- Serve as a link between the school and work sites or other community settings.

Strategies for Maintaining Professionalism & Fulfilling Ethical Responsibilities

The following section provides some guidelines for considering confidentiality and other ethical issues and responsibilities:

- Maintain confidentiality about all personal information and educational records concerning students and their families.
- Respect the legal and human rights of children, youth, and their families.
- Follow district policies for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of students.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the distinctions in the roles of various education personnel.
- Follow the directions of teachers and other supervisors.
- Maintain a record of regular attendance, arrive and depart at specified times, and notify appropriate personnel when absent.

- Demonstrate loyalty, dependability, integrity, and respect for individual differences and other standards of ethical conduct.
- Follow the established chain of command for various administrative procedures.
- Demonstrate a willingness to learn new skills and participate in continuing education provided by the district.

Common Questions About Confidentiality

Paraprofessionals often have questions about maintaining confidentiality when working with students and their families. Here are some answers to some commonly asked questions:

- Why must confidentiality be maintained?
  Federal laws, state regulations, and local policies require it.
- Who may have access to written or oral information about students or their families?
  Only personnel responsible for the design, preparation, and delivery of education and related services; and/or personnel with responsibility for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of a child or youth.
- Who should not have access to information about the performance level, behavior, program goals and objectives, or progress of a child or youth?
  Personnel and others who aren't responsible for planning or providing services to students or their families.
- What information do students and their families have the right to expect will be kept confidential?
  - *The results of formal and informal assessments*
  - *Social and behavioral actions*
  - *Performance levels and progress*
  - *Program goals and objectives*
  - *Information about family relationships and other personal matters*

Confidentiality Case Study

The following scenario is offered as a typical situation that you may encounter as a paraprofessional. As you read about the case, think about how you might handle this situation:

> You have recently been hired by Lincoln School as a para-educator. Before starting work you were told by your supervisor that you're required to maintain confidentiality about the lives and records of the students with whom you work. On your first day on the job, you walk in to the teachers' lounge where you meet Ms. Carlson, who has been teaching at Lincoln for 35 years. Over the years, she has come to know many of the families in the area and has developed opinions, which she frequently shares with others, about their lifestyles and the ways they raise their children. She believes that if some students are

Discussion 1

Give students a few minutes to read the confidentiality case study and then ask them to come up with some different ways that this situation could be handled. Discuss the pros and cons of each alternative.

Activity 1

After discussing the *Confidentiality Case Study*, have students form pairs to role play the scenario using one or two of the strategies that the class came up with during their discussion.

"troublemakers" and "not too bright," their brothers and sisters will be as well.

This year, Ms. Carlson has Elmer in her class and he's behaving exactly like his older brother Tyler did two years ago when she had him as a student. Ms. Carlson begins to talk about Elmer and all the things he did that day to disrupt the classroom.

Elmer and Tyler have a younger sister, Lizzy, who is in your class. You're fond of Lizzy and think she's doing well in school. Ms. Carlson keeps asking you about Lizzy, but you're concerned about both her openness in talking about Elmer and Tyler as well as her questions about Lizzy. You tell her that Lizzy's doing just fine, but she doesn't seem to believe you.

Scenario adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Summary

This chapter touched on some of the many and varied roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals working with students in transition. It's important to continue thinking about the many ways that your participation can be helpful to your students' transition teams.

As a paraprofessional and service provider, you should be aware of your ethical responsibilities to your students and their families. Confidentiality is often one of your most important responsibilities. As you move forward, it will be useful to continue thinking about confidentiality in terms of its importance, the extent to which your students are entitled to it, and its limits.

Questions to Ponder

- As an individual working in a school or community service agency, what is your role regarding confidentiality?
- What resources should you access if you question your role in a confidential situation?

4

Chapter Four

Communication & Problem Solving

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Introduction

Whether or not paraprofessionals are actively participating in a student's IEP meetings, they're always an important part of the transition planning team. Because they work closely with students and professionals in a variety of settings — regular and special education classrooms, work sites, community agencies, and students' homes — paraprofessionals provide a critical "communications link" among the various individuals in a student's life.

Paraprofessionals are sometimes confronted with problems that involve conflict or disagreement with others. Using good communication skills can often prevent problems from arising. However, when problems do arise, it's sometimes helpful to have some formalized techniques available to guide yourself to a reasonable and effective solution.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Become familiar with what it means to have an assertive communication style as opposed to a passive or aggressive communication style.
- Develop an awareness of your own social skills and communication style.
- Become familiar with some of the elements that foster clear communication between teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Become familiar with a formalized problem-solving technique.
- Begin utilizing problem-solving techniques in approaching real-life situations.

Section 1

Effective Communication

While out in the community, paraprofessionals are the "frontline" representatives of the school as they work with students on developing employment and independent living skills (Pickett, 1993). Having such a visible job requires that they learn and practice the skills necessary to be effective communicators. The following are examples of three commonly used communication styles:

Passive Communication

- **Definition:** Allowing others to treat you, your thoughts and feelings in whatever way they want, without your expression.
- **Characteristics:** Avoiding problems, letting others take advantage of you, becoming angry.
- **Results:** Feeling powerless, wasting time.

Show Transparency 4.1

Discussion 1

Use Transparency 4.1 to discuss the three styles of communication. Ask students to share ways that they think these different styles could affect their effectiveness on the job.

Activity 1

Have students form groups of four to six people. Have them think of a problem that they might encounter with a teacher at their school. Then ask them to role play ways in which the problem could be addressed using passive, aggressive, and assertive communication styles. Instruct them to rotate roles so that everyone has a chance to participate as well as observe. After 10 or 15 minutes, ask the class members to share some of their experiences from the small groups.

Activity 2

Explain that the *Paraprofessional Communication & Social Skills Inventory* is designed to help them assess their own strengths and weaknesses. Ask them to take some time to fill in the inventory. Invite them to share some ways that they might actively attempt to improve in areas in which they feel they aren't currently very strong.

Aggressive Communication

- **Definition:** Standing up for what you want, regardless of the rights and feelings of others.
- **Characteristics:** Attacking people rather than problems, letting anger get out of control, demanding not requesting.
- **Results:** Temporary satisfaction, offending others, fear and avoidance by other people.

Assertive Communication

- **Definition:** Standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts feeling and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways which respect the rights of other people.
- **Characteristics:** Focusing on the problem, establishing good working relationships, dealing appropriately with anger, expressing feelings.
- **Results:** Solving problems, receiving respect from others, feeling good about yourself.

Adapted with permission from PACER Center, Inc. (1988). ***Students in transition using planning**: Teacher's manual*, pp. 67-68. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

Paraprofessional Communication & Social Skills Inventory

This isn't a test: this is a tool you can use to rate your ability to communicate/interact with coworkers, students, parents, and other people you come into contact with on the job. It's designed to help you assess your social skills, your ability to express your feelings, and to help you identify skills you would like to improve. Circle the number to the right of each item that best describes how well you use a specific skill. When you have completed the inventory, review the various skills and think about those you feel are important to the way you perform your job. Choose three that you would like to improve and make a list of ways you can change these behaviors.

1 = *Very poorly*
2 = *Not very well*
3 = *Average*
4 = *Very well*
5 = *Extremely well*

1	Active listening	1	2	3	4	5
2	Starting a conversation	1	2	3	4	5
3	Asking for a favor	1	2	3	4	5
4	Giving a compliment	1	2	3	4	5
5	Accepting a compliment	1	2	3	4	5
6	Accepting criticism	1	2	3	4	5

7	Giving criticism	1	2	3	4	5
8	Apologizing	1	2	3	4	5
9	Giving instructions	1	2	3	4	5
10	Following instructions	1	2	3	4	5
11	Expressing your feelings	1	2	3	4	5
12	Handling anger	1	2	3	4	5
13	Dealing with conflict	1	2	3	4	5
14	Problem solving	1	2	3	4	5
15	Standing up for your rights	1	2	3	4	5
16	Stating what you want	1	2	3	4	5
17	Stating an unpopular opinion	1	2	3	4	5
18	Saying "no"	1	2	3	4	5
19	Having a positive attitude	1	2	3	4	5
20	Asking questions	1	2	3	4	5
21	Completing tasks	1	2	3	4	5
22	Dealing with resistance	1	2	3	4	5

Paraprofessional Communication & Social Skills Inventory adapted with permission from Thurston, L. (1993). *A teacher self-assessment inventory.* In Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Strategies for Communicating with Teachers

There are a number of elements that must be present in any situation to ensure clear channels of communication. Some are commonplace and things we take for granted. If the members of the team aren't careful and don't pay attention, positive communication can be inhibited. For example:

- The attitudes and feelings of both teachers and paraprofessionals need to be known, respected, and understood. They need to deal openly with their attitudes and feelings toward their roles and duties, their attitudes toward students with whom they work, their attitudes toward instructional styles and management, and their attitudes toward the value of the other person's contributions. When feelings aren't shared and openly communicated, the nature of the relationship won't grow and the team will be less effective.
- An understanding of the similarities and differences among the people involved in the team must be recognized and understood. They may include different points of view about educational strategies, different values, different cultural and reli-

gious heritage, different levels of education and experience, and other factors that can affect the working relationship.

- Teachers, paraprofessionals, and other education personnel should actively seek to develop and share a common vocabulary.
- Teachers must make sure that their directions and expectations are clearly understood and that paraprofessionals have the information and skills they require to perform their assigned tasks.
- Paraprofessionals must be willing to ask for clarification or assistance if an assignment isn't understood.
- Teachers should determine what special interests, talents, and training the paraprofessionals have that will complement and enhance their own skills and improve the delivery of education services to children and youth.
- The team must actively work to create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty by meeting regularly to discuss procedures and techniques that will establish and maintain open channels of communication.

Strategies for Communicating with Teachers adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L. (1990). *A training program for paraprofessionals working in special education and related services* (2nd ed.). New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Section 2
Solving Problems

Many times, because of the pressures of other duties, education teams may ignore or postpone dealing with a problem that involves disagreements or conflicts with adults with whom they work. This may often accentuate the differences among individuals involved in planning and implementing education and related services. It's necessary for the people involved to decide on a course of action. Finding mutually acceptable solutions isn't always easy, and the responsibility for developing effective procedures for alleviating problems are likely to be left to the teachers and paraprofessionals with little outside assistance or support.

A Problem-Solving Technique

The following are a series of steps that can be used by teachers and paraprofessionals to improve their ability to work together and with students, parents, and others. While this approach to problem solving is based on people working together to achieve consensus, there are often times when it's necessary for teachers and other supervisors to make decisions that paraprofessionals may not always fully appreciate. However, by maintaining open lines of communication and mutual trust, these problems should be few and far between.

Step One – Identify and Describe the Problem

A situation must be clearly understood if concerns and issues will lead to a satisfactory solution. Everyone involved in a situation or participating in planning efforts should describe the problem in their own words and from their own point of view. This may be done by asking and answering these questions: What is the problem? Who is involved? Who is affected? How are they affected?

Step Two – Define and Determine the Cause of the Problem

It isn't enough to identify the problem: it's essential to determine what has created the problem and what causes it to persist. For example, the problem may be caused by "outside conditions" (contractual agreements, a lack of financial resources) that an instructional team may have little ability to change, or it may have its roots in a lack of understanding of the distinction between the roles and duties of teachers and paraprofessionals. Other factors that can influence how a problem is defined may include differences in values and attitudes, age, work experience, education, cultural heritage, and/or religious beliefs. Still other concerns may be connected with the move to restructure education systems and procedures, efforts to provide education services in community and learning environments, and the need to involve parents and other caregivers in all aspects of their child's education. It's important that the real problem be separated from surface events and that areas of agreement and disagreement be identified.

Step Three – Decide on a Goal and Identify Alternative Solutions

Only once the problem has been identified can strategies be developed. The primary question that needs to be asked and answered is "what do we want to achieve and how can we go about achieving it?" By working together and brainstorming a list of alternative solutions to the problem, the team members will have several options that will enable them to choose a course of action with which they can all live. It will also enable them to determine what additional information, physical or human resources, skills or knowledge they will need to carry out the solution and whether or not these resources are essential to achieving the goal.

Step Four – Select and Implement a Course of Action

To make a decision about which course of action will be tried, the participants should decide which solution is most likely to get the desired results. Agreeing on a solution isn't enough. The participants must try it out and test it to see if it will work. They must also give it enough time to see if the solution will work since behaviors and new skills can't be changed overnight. The goal isn't necessarily to agree on a final course of action or agree on a point of view, but to find a common ground which everyone is willing to accept. Acceptance does not equal agreement.

Step Five – Evaluate the Results

Has the problem been resolved? Is there progress? If not, why? Should we try another one of the alternatives? Should we ask for assistance from other sources? All of these are questions that will need to be addressed in order to assess the effectiveness of the process.

Information in *A Problem-Solving Technique* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L. (1990). *A training program for paraprofessionals working in special education and related services* (2nd ed.). New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Show Transparency 4.2

Additional Problem-Solving Strategies

1 **Define:**

- The problem as one person sees it.
- The problem as the other person sees it.
- Develop a common or shared definition.

2 **Ask:**

- Who is involved?
- How are they involved?
- What behaviors or attitudes of the different individuals need to be changed?

3 **List:**

- Areas of mutual agreement concerning problems.
- Areas of disagreement.
- The barriers to finding a solution.

4 **Develop:**

- Desired goals.
- Solutions by brainstorming various ideas.
- A list of resources, information, or assistance that will help you achieve the goal.

5 **Implement:**

- The solution for a specific time period and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.
- If necessary, select and implement another alternative.

Problem-Solving Scenarios

During all phases of transitional and vocational training, paraprofessionals and the students with whom they work will come into contact with many people including employers, coworkers, clerks in stores, bus drivers, members of the general public, and representatives of human services agencies that provide forms of support and assistance. Review the following scenarios and develop one or more strategies you might use to prepare the student to cope with the situation. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the other members of the class.

1 You're training Jerry to recognize and follow traffic signals. A jaywalker crosses the street against the light and Jerry tries to cross with her. When you take Jerry's arm, he begins to yell at you and then refuses to cross when the light changes. What will you do?

2 John works for a catering company serving a major airline. You trained him to set up the meal trays for the coach class seats and faded your assistance several weeks ago. Yesterday the teacher received a call from John's supervisor. John had been transferred to doing the trays for the first class section which required him to fill small salt and pepper shakers and place them on each tray rather than wrap individual packets in a napkin. Filling the shakers was difficult for John – so he substituted the packets. The supervisor tried several ways to help John fill the shakers and do the job properly. Finally, John threw several shakers on the floor and stormed out. The supervisor says they need someone for the job who is flexible and can be assigned to different tasks at a moment's notice and John does not seem to be able to do this. What can you and the teacher do to assist John and the supervisor?

3 You're teaching Joanne to use an automatic teller machine (ATM). She keeps punching in the wrong access code and starts to pound on the machine when she does not receive the money. There are three or four people in line behind her. The bank manager approaches you, says Joanne is annoying the customers, and asks you to use another branch. What strategies would you use to assist Joanne and to help other people understand the situation?

Scenarios adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Summary

This chapter has given you a framework for evaluating your communication style and some strategies for communicating with teachers. The chapter also has presented some formalized approaches to solving problems that you may encounter as a paraprofessional. Problems can often be prevented by utilizing good communication skills. If problems do develop, it might be helpful to develop a solution using an approach like the ones presented

Activity 1

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the scenarios outlined in this section. After the groups have had time to develop some strategies, have them share their ideas with the rest of the class. If you have time, use one of the scenarios from Activity 1 (in conjunction with Transparency 4.2) to go through the problem-solving strategy step by step. Emphasize that one of the benefits of using this strategy is that it breaks the problem-solving process into small, manageable steps.

in this chapter. Remember, one of the keys to many problem-solving strategies is to break the process into small, manageable steps and then to proceed in an organized fashion.

Questions to Ponder

- Can you think of a situation in your life when it might have been helpful to step back from a problem and employ a formalized problem-solving strategy? How would the solution have been different?
- Many of us find it difficult to look at our own communication styles objectively and nondefensively. What was it like to use the *Paraprofessional Communication & Social Skills Inventory* in this chapter to evaluate your own skills? Do you think you might respond to the items in the inventory differently depending on the situation or with whom you were communicating?
- Effective communication involves active participation from both people involved. Are you comfortable asking for clarification from a teacher or other team member when you don't understand what is being said?

5

Chapter Five

Assessment & Goal Setting

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29 **Section 2 Observing & Recording Data**
30 **Section 3 Setting Transition Goals & Objectives**
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Introduction

Before a transition team can set goals with a student, information about the student must be gathered and analyzed. The process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information related to the student is called *assessment*. As part of the assessment process, a paraprofessional may be called upon to observe the student as he or she interacts with the environment and learns new skills. In order to make full use of the observational data, objective and accurate records must be kept. Using the information from the observation and assessment, the transition team is better able to develop transition goals that are appropriate to the student's needs.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Become familiar with the different methods of assessment discussed in the chapter: standardized testing, behavioral checklists, and functional assessments.
- Understand what is meant by "objective observation."
- Report behaviors in a manner that is both observable and measurable.
- Be familiar with ways that observations are recorded.
- Understand the distinction between goals and objectives.
- Be familiar with developing objectives that include the three components of behavior, criteria, and conditions.

Section 1

Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting and interpreting information relating to a student with a disability. The purpose of assessment is to determine the student's present skill level. This provides a basis on which new learning experiences can be planned. Usually, before a student is assigned to a particular program or classroom, a thorough assessment has been carried out. This will have included a comprehensive look at the student's physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic development and a determination of his or her strengths in each area. Traditionally, teachers and other professional staff have been responsible for conducting some of the assessment activities. Paraprofessionals are often asked to help identify the student's functional capabilities by observing and recording information. It's important to remember that many times the people with the most relevant and important information are those who spend a large amount of time with the student. Parents, relatives, and peers can contribute valuable information which can also be considered assessment data. Direct conversations with and observations of the student can also yield valuable insights.

Activity 1

Write each of the three types of assessment on the board. Ask the students to name some advantages and disadvantages of each assessment approach. As they list them, write them below the appropriate group. When you feel you have generated enough input from the class, have a short discussion about which methods will give the most information for transition planning with students with disabilities.

Three Ways to Carry Out Assessment

Assessment can be done in a variety of ways. Standardized testing and behavioral checklists are two types of assessment that require special instruments. Each of these is discussed below. However, observations of how students use specific skills to manage their environment are an important part of the assessment process as well.

Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are always given in the same way — using the same instructions and the same material — and scored using the same method every time, one which is based on the scoring of tests administered to a broad range of people, and for which an "average" score or a "norm" has been established.

Standardized tests compare how well an individual student performs a given task in comparison to the way in which many other students of the same age have performed the same task. In order for standardized tests to be useful and fair, the group of people to whom the individual is being compared must reflect the cultural and ethnic background of the student being evaluated. Each school may use its own battery of tests and assessment tools depending on what it finds most useful or valid. There is no consistency across all schools.

Behavioral Checklists

Behavioral checklists categorize specific behaviors, usually in developmental areas such as fine motor, cognitive, language, gross motor, etc. Usually, specific behaviors are also listed in the sequence in which they occur in a "typical" developmental pattern. The person using the checklist simply checks off whether or not the student is able to perform that specific type of behavior. The checklist can be helpful in formally evaluating specific skills in the classroom or other areas. They can also be used informally to indicate strengths and possible areas where assistance is needed.

Functional Assessment

While both standardized tests and behavioral checklists will probably remain an integral part of the assessment data that is gathered for each student with disabilities, the most important assessments are usually done informally and relate to the functional skills of the individual. Almost of us would have a difficult time if it were necessary for us to meet the criteria of a specific test battery in order to get on with our lives. For example, what if scuba diving, glider flying, bowling with an average score of 200, and mountain climbing were set as the criteria for any of us to go to our next life goal? This is a silly question, of course, but it has some relevance when one thinks of all the assessments that may be carried out on students with disabilities. With functional assessments, the student, the parent(s), a relative, or a friend often have the most valid information and their insights should be included. This can be done with informal surveys or checklists.

Information in *Three Ways to Carry Out Assessment* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Section 2

Observing & Recording Data

Acquiring and using objective skills of observation and data keeping are important to all education paraprofessionals, no matter whether they work as instructional assistants, transition trainers, or job coaches. Much of the information required to let the team know whether or not students are gaining new skills is acquired by careful observation and good record keeping. In addition, observation will keep the team posted on whether or not the students are learning and using the functional skills necessary to let them achieve the objectives and long-term goals that are outlined in the IEP or ITP.

Through observation, we can learn what the students can do, what they like or dislike, how they behave under various circumstances, and how they interact with people around them. There are two points to remember when making observations: a behavior must be both *observable* and *measurable*. In other words, we must be able to see or hear a behavior, and we must be able to count or time how often it occurs.

For example, an observation that says "Frank hit John on the arm twice within five minutes" fulfills both of these points. The observer saw Frank hit John and counted the hits as they happened. An observation that says "Annie was being her usual schizophrenic self this morning" fails both points. "Her usual schizophrenic self" really tells us nothing about Annie. It is, instead, a judgment call made by the observer and gives no information. It doesn't tell us what the observer saw and, since we don't have that information, there's nothing to count — and, therefore, we have nothing to build on when planning personalized instructional interventions.

Show Transparency 5.1

Discussion 1

Discuss what it means to be objective in one's observations. Emphasize, in particular, that reported behaviors should be both observable and measurable. If you have time, ask the class to generate some behavioral scenarios and then report the scenarios in both an appropriate and inappropriate fashion.

Recording Your Observations

There are several ways to record your observations:

- **Checklists:** These may be in the form of standardized checklists which include specific skills and behaviors based on developmental levels, or a list of behaviors compiled by a teacher. When paraprofessionals work with a checklist, they simply watch the student and record whether or not she or he is doing the behavior described.
- **Anecdotal records:** These usually consist of a sentence or two written in a notebook that describe what the student is doing at a specific moment. When making an anecdotal record, only behaviors that can be seen or heard and behaviors that can be counted should be recorded.
- **Interviewing:** This is a specific kind of record keeping, one in which the team is trying to determine what the student likes or dislikes — his or her interests or other feelings or beliefs that can't be observed. When interviewing, it's extremely important to record precisely what the student says. There's no room for editorializing with this kind of record. Interviewing parents and caregivers is also very important.
- **Frequency or duration notes:** Sometimes, the information that is to be collected refers to how often or for how long a behavior is occurring. For example, the team may want to know how many times a student talked to or communicated with his or her playmates or how often a student initiated a conversation with coworkers. For this kind of record keeping, paraprofessionals will count the frequency of the behavior occurring and observe how long some behaviors last. For example, a transition facilitator might watch to see how long a student in supported employment works without supervision, or how well the student follows instruction.

Information in *Recording Your Observations* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Section 3

Setting Transition Goals & Objectives

When the individual, family, and education team develop an IEP together, there are key questions to ask that will enable the establishment of goals and objectives that will facilitate the student's integration and participation in community settings. The team should be sure that they can answer the questions before they start planning. The questions include:

- What are the student's ultimate goals?
- Will the skills that we propose to teach help this student to achieve his or her goals?
- Are the skills to be taught practical and functional? If the student does not learn a skill, will someone else need to perform the task for him or her or provide assistance?
- Will learning the skills enhance the life of the student and enable the student to enjoy life more?
- Although we may want to teach many skills, time is a factor. Which of those proposed are of highest priority for the student?

Appropriate Goals

Future Adult Goals

Future adult goals are statements that describe a student's future goals in the five transition areas:

- Home living.
- Leisure and recreation.
- Community participation.
- Postsecondary training and learning.
- Jobs and job training.

These goals are based on a student's interests and skills and are gradually more refined as a student nears graduation. They provide the direction for annual goals and objectives.

Annual Goals

Annual goals need to be stated in such a way that anyone who reads them knows exactly what is meant. For example, an annual goal for an adolescent may be "Juan will increase his stamina on his gardening job from five hours a week to twenty hours by May 1, 1997." The goal is clear and describes precisely where Juan wants to be in the future.

Objectives

Each goal carries a series of objectives to accomplish. Some of them may include skills that the student needs to learn in order to attain the goal. Some of them may be activities that staff or family need to carry out so that the individual may reach the goal. An example would be arranging transportation so that a student can physically get to the desired places. Instructional objectives are statements that generally have three components:

Show Transparency 5.2

Discussion 1

Use Transparency 5.2 to lead a discussion on goals and objectives. Have students come up with examples of goals and objectives. Write them on the board or overhead. Have the class identify the behavior, criteria, and condition for each example.

Activity 1

Break the class into small groups and ask them to underline the behavior, criteria, and conditions in each of the four examples of transition goals and objectives given in the chapter. Also ask them to write an additional objective for each example.

- The behavior or the description of the skill the student will be able to do when the instruction is complete.
- The criteria or description of how the behavior will be evaluated.
- The conditions or a description of how the activity will be taught.

Goals and objectives should be written in such a way that the student, first and foremost, understands them and comprehends what is expected.

Information in *Objectives* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Examples of Transition Goals & Objectives

Community Involvement

- **Long-term goal:** I want to be able to vote, go shopping on my own, keep up my own health care, and join some community clubs or organizations as an adult. I also want to travel in my community on my own.
- **Annual goal:** I will increase my participation in extra curricular school activities from none to one per quarter by next June.
- **Objective:** Given a list of extra-curricular activities, I will pick one activity to get involved in each quarter and will make an appointment to talk to the activity advisor ahead of time to figure out if I want to get involved and to discuss accessibility and accommodations. I will pick an activity at least two weeks before the beginning of each quarter, as monitored by my IEP manager.

Employment

- **Long-term goal:** After having lots of jobs, I decided that I like and am best at working in an office with lots of people around.
- **Annual goal:** During this final school year, I will apply for and be hired in a clerical employment position where I will progress in independence from full-time support to a daily check by school support personnel with support from coworkers as needed.
- **Objective:** With the help of my DRS counselor, I will look for a job near my home. When I find a job I like, I will increase independence on the job from 100% support to a daily check by next June, as monitored by my work experience coordinator.

Home Living

- **Long-term goal:** Thomas will continue to live with his family for a while after completing high school at age 21. He enjoys having his own room; he also like the company of people who are quiet and caring. We can tell this by the way he smiles when he's in his room and around his family and friends. He gets agitated when he has to share a room at his respite provider's home, when he's in the hospital, or around loud people and strangers. A future living situation with a lot of people or noise wouldn't suit Thomas. At some point, Thomas' family hopes he can share a quiet house or apartment with another man who is caring and quiet. From past training, it appears Thomas will need continual support with personal and daily living activities throughout his adult life.
- **Annual goal:** Thomas will increase his skills in choosing and preparing snacks and simple meals from being able to select a food item when two items are set in front of him and preparing about five food items, to selecting a snack from the refrigerator or cupboard and preparing up to ten food items, including breakfast, snacks, and a bag lunch.
- **Objective:** Given a stocked refrigerator and cupboard, Thomas will select the snack of his choice after school on four out of five school days per week by the end of the school year as monitored by his mom and teachers.

Postsecondary Education and Training

- **Long-term goal:** I want to work in the law enforcement field, maybe as a dispatcher. I plan to go to a postsecondary school that has training in law enforcement.
- **Annual goal:** I will increase preparation activities for entry next fall into a postsecondary setting that offers a program in my interest area from having visited several postsecondary sites to completing an application and being accepted into an educational setting, finding financial aid, and setting up accommodations by graduation this spring.
- **Objective:** I will travel by city bus to the office of my State Services for the Blind counselor and meet with my counselor at least four times over the course of the school year for assistance in planning and funding my postsecondary education.

Information in *Examples of Transition Goals & Objectives* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

This chapter has introduced standardized testing, behavioral checklists, and functional assessments in order to familiarize you with some of the more popular and current assessment methods. The chapter has also stressed the importance of objective observation during the assessment process. The last part of our discussion of assessment focused on some of the ways that observations are recorded. We stressed the need to record observations in a way that is both observable and measurable.

The last part of the chapter emphasized the distinction between *goals* and *objectives*. Goals should be stated as precisely as possible. Objectives should be stated in ways that include a behavior component, a criteria component, and a condition component.

Questions to Ponder

- Remember that the records you keep are used to make decisions that impact on your students' lives. Can you imagine a situation in which two different observers might observe the same event but record and report the event very differently? Taking it one step further, can you imagine how different decisions might be made or different goals might be set depending on which records were used?
- What are some of the advantages of having goals and objectives that are very specific? Can you think of any disadvantages?
- Standardized tests are often criticized as an assessment tool because they aren't always very reliable (i.e., the student might score differently the next time the test is given.) What would you do if you saw a test result that you didn't think accurately reflected a student's performance, aptitude, ability, etc.?

6

Chapter Six

Student & Family Involvement

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Introduction

Students must begin to be actively involved in their transition planning by age 14. Involvement means that, to the best of their abilities, students participate in and provide input into the development of their transition goals. It's the school's responsibility to encourage student involvement by planning activities designed to inform them of their options, show them the pros and cons of various courses of action, and teach them how to participate in the IEP meeting. Students must be encouraged to attend their IEP meeting and be provided with support to participate in those meetings (Wehman, 1992).

Self-determination concerns the attitudes and abilities that lead people to take charge of their lives. This includes the opportunity to exercise choice, effectively solve problems, and take control and responsibility for their actions. In the transition process, as in life, self-determination is enhanced through a collaboration between concerned parties: teachers, paraprofessionals, families, community representatives, and students.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Begin to build a set of strategies and resources that will help students to be involved in their own transition planning.
- Develop some insight into the types of activities that students might need to participate in to ensure their successful transition.
- Develop an awareness of the types of student/paraprofessional interaction that encourage self-determination.
- Develop or heighten your appreciation for the diversity of ways in which students experience a sense of family.
- Gain an understanding of the many roles that parents play in the transition of their sons and daughters.
- Find some ways that you can offer support to students and their families during transition planning and implementation.

Section 1

Student Involvement in Transition Planning

The Paraprofessional's Role

Because paraprofessionals work in one-on-one situations with students on a daily basis, they often develop very close relationships with them. Through highly individualized instruction, paraprofessionals are able to provide students with opportunities to gain new skills and hands-on experiences that would otherwise not be available to them. The most effective paraprofessionals allow and encourage students to work as independently as possible. This strategy prevents students from becoming overly dependent on them.

The longer students and paraprofessionals work together, the more likely students are to open up and disclose personal information. Because of this, paraprofessionals often find themselves "counseling" students on issues and problems that are unrelated to their work. While some personal talk is natural, extensive counseling should be left to the school professionals who are trained to deal with these complex matters. A good rule to follow is if personal conversations are getting in the way of accomplishing your work, then you should suggest that the student talk to a trained professional. (See Chapter 3 for more information.)

Discussion 1

Take time to discuss the close relationship that often exists between the paraprofessional and the student. Have students come up with examples of how this relationship can be beneficial for students. You may also want to ask students to help you build a list of potential problems associated with this type of relationship (e.g., learned helplessness, the paraprofessional as a counselor, etc.)

What Do Students Want & Need?

When young adults with disabilities were asked what they thought students should do to ensure a successful transition, they offered a variety of practical suggestions. These comments were taken from forums held throughout Minnesota and interviews with former students of the Minneapolis Public Schools:

- Work on transition planning with your IEP manager. Write down your goals, plans, and what you like.
- Learn good communication skills so you can tell people what you want.
- Learn about resources like SSI (Supplemental Security Income), DRS (Division of Rehabilitation Services), and social services, and get information on all available options.
- Take a more active role in meetings. Take more responsibility and ask more questions.
- Join groups that can help, like local advocacy groups, church groups, and community education classes. Get more work experience, especially by trying to work part-time for pay.
- Take classes in independent living. Learn how to cook, shop, budget, and how to recognize and count money.
- Find out how to access community resources, services, and emergency systems and how to get help filling out forms. Learn self-determination and advocacy skills and how to make decisions.
- Get a driver's license, if you can, or learn how to use other transportation systems.
- Be serious, do your homework, and budget your time. Learn to use a calendar to write down your assignments and to help you plan time to study. Tell your teachers you have a disability.
- List your strengths and challenges. Find out what you're good at and put extra effort into areas that you're best at. Then set

goals and go for them, but don't be disappointed if you can't do everything — no one can do it all.

- Learn about accommodations that will help you, like using a spell-checker, asking people to show you how to do things instead of expecting you to read it from a book, using note takers, asking for extended time for tests, asking for tutors, having books read to you and using taped textbooks, and having someone read and edit your papers before you turn them in. It will help you a lot if you learn what these accommodations are and how to ask for them before you leave high school.
- Visit schools, talk to some instructors, and sit in on some classes before you decide which school you want to attend.

Information in *What Do Students Want & Need?* adapted with permission from:

Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities (1994). *Minnesota speaks out.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Paraprofessional Strategies

How to Involve Students in Transition Planning

- Starting at age 14, always have the student attend his or her transition-planning meeting, regardless of whether you feel they will understand or participate fully.
- Include transition planning and related instruction in the school curriculum to assist students in learning why participation is essential.
- Assist the student in identifying goals and dreams prior to the planning meeting. Use a checklist, survey, or other informal tool to pinpoint priorities of the student.
- Direct as much of the plan development and questioning process to the student as possible.
- Have the student assume as much responsibility as possible in the before, during, and after stages of the planning process.
- Whenever possible, assign tasks identified on the transition plan to the student and offer to provide the necessary supports.
- Have the student make his or her own appointments, fill out forms, and call for information as often as possible.
- Avoid activities that increase learned helplessness. Assist students in developing as many independence skills as possible.
- Direct questions at the team meetings to the student and guide the meeting based on their responses. Don't try to avoid the student's concerns or speak as if the student wasn't there.
- Prepare the student ahead of time for what will happen at the meeting: how to participate, what is expected, etc.

Section 2

Self-Determination

The Paraprofessional's Role

All students, regardless of the severity of their disability, have the potential to learn. One of the capacities they can acquire is self-determination. Learning to take control of one's life is an ongoing process. While some students will acquire these skills informally, others may need specific instruction to facilitate the acquisition and use of those skills and attitudes necessary to take charge of their lives. In addition, students with disabilities need opportunities to exercise these skills within the school and community.

Paraprofessional Strategies

Encourage Self-Advocacy

Students who enhance their self-determination skills learn to assert their rights and clearly communicate their needs, becoming advocates for themselves in the process. Students themselves are in the best position to define their personal vision and advocate for the changes and supports they believe will make it a reality.

Increase Responsibility

When students exercise control over their lives, they learn to take responsibility for their actions. The best way to teach students about responsibility is to give them the opportunity to make choices and experience the outcomes of their decisions.

Enhance Motivation

When students have opportunities to set personal goals and make choices, they become partners in the learning process. This increases their motivation, directly enhancing the quality of learning within the classroom. Motivated students are likely to increase their participation in learning activities. In addition, difficult-to-reach students may become motivated to get involved when given opportunities to experience some control over their education.

Encourage Prosocial Behaviors

Inappropriate classroom behaviors often represent students' most effective means of exercising control over their environment. By teaching students to take charge of their lives and providing them daily opportunities to practice choice-making, self-control, and personal advocacy skills, we promote the development and use of prosocial means through which to exercise control within the classroom, school, and community.

Activity 1

Break the class into small groups. Have them discuss strategies that might help a student who has become very dependent on a paraprofessional's support to advocate for him or herself. When the class reconvenes, have them share some of their ideas as you write them on the board or overhead.

Improve Self-Esteem

Exercising control over one's life leads to a feeling of positive self-worth and increased self-confidence. Promoting the self-determination of students has the potential to increase their belief that events are under their personal control. The feeling of being in charge is likely to lead to an enhanced sense of competence. When students increase their perception of control, they improve their focus, task persistence, motivation, and subsequent educational outcomes.

Enhance Inclusion

When we encourage students to take charge of their lives, we are assisting them in the process of becoming a fully included member of society. Self-determination skills directly enhance the capacity of students to live independently or semi-independently in the community, acquire and maintain employment, and develop a supportive circle of friends.

Promote Self-Awareness

Individuals can only truly be aware of their capacities and limits through a lifelong pursuit of challenge and through experiences of success and temporary misfortune. Students are often not given the opportunity to experience this process. Through first-hand discovery of their own capacities, students can understand, adjust to, and accept the challenges imposed by a disability. In addition, students can better appreciate and take advantage of their talents and strengths through this process.

Encourage a Positive Public Image

People with disabilities are often viewed in a negative light by the general public. Enhancing the capacity of students with disabilities to make mature, independent choices will facilitate a positive change in this image. Enhanced self-determination will promote a view of people with disabilities as members of society who are entitled to full rights as citizens and who are respected for their abilities and the contributions they make to the community.

Promote Independence

When students are encouraged to take charge of their lives, their independence is enhanced. Students who aren't given the opportunities to make these decisions learn to be dependent on others. Students who are taught to make their own choices and are given opportunities to apply these skills to their own lives learn to make mature, informed decisions.

Enhance Awareness of Rights

Promoting self-determination will enhance the acceptance and understanding of the basic human rights of all individuals, including those with disabilities. Moreover, it will provide a convenient forum to discuss topics which are often associated with the infringement of human rights, such as prejudice, stereotyping, and bias. These are valuable lessons not only for students with disabilities but for all people in society.

Create a Vision of the Future

All of us dream about our future. This basic right may be denied to people with disabilities. Their vision is often determined by others. Enhanced self-determination will facilitate a student's acquisition of the self-awareness, problem-solving, personal advocacy, and self-regulation skills necessary to create this vision for their future.

Enhance Personal Control

Beyond simply creating a vision for their future, self-determination skills enable students to actually realize this vision — on their terms. In doing so, they begin a direct and immediate enrichment of the quality of their lives, and also a cumulative enrichment over the long-term outcome of life. Students with refined self-determination skills enhance personal control over their lives.

Information in *Paraprofessional Strategies* adapted with permission from Abery, B., et. al., (1994). *Why educators support self-determination for students with disabilities.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

Section 3

Family Involvement

Families of students with disabilities must be encouraged to participate actively in their son's or daughter's transition planning. It's the responsibility of the school to see that one or both parents are present and involved in their child's IEP meeting. This often involves scheduling meetings at convenient times and places for parents and arranging for an interpreter for parents whose native language isn't English.

Educators should talk to students and their families about the goals and dreams they envision for their child once he or she leaves school. Do they see their child living independently, working in the community, or going on to a technical or community college? Outcomes in each of the five transition areas (employment, home living, community participation, recreation and leisure, and post-school training and education) need to be addressed with families long before their child is ready to leave school. Once these questions are answered, a transition plan can be developed with goals and services designed to meet the specific outcomes for the individual student (Wehman, 1992). Families should be able to choose the services they feel are appropriate rather than simply being satisfied with those already in place. An informal checklist or survey can be given to families ahead of time to help them pinpoint areas of interest or concern. The results can be used to guide discussion at the meeting.

What is a Family?

A definition:

> A family is two or more individuals who may or may not share blood ties or be related by marriage and who share similar values and attitudes. Adult members of this group take responsibility for the children living with them by providing for education, values training, clothing, and food. The individuals in the group see themselves as united in their goals and aspirations.

What is a Family? used with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., &Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York. The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

What Families Want & Need

When Minnesota parents of high school students were asked about their opinions on transition services, they offered the following comments:

- Transition objectives should be included on IEPs.
- They need information about available options both in school and for the future.
- They want to feel free to ask questions and make suggestions. Their participation in transition planning is important.
- Students' likes and desires should be respected.
- Students should be taught to be self-advocates.
- Teachers should be helped to accept students who are making decisions for themselves.
- Teachers should be allowed and encouraged to get out into the community to develop options.
- Clearly defined plans for accessing services in adult environments should be developed.
- Teachers should receive incentives to learn more about transition; more training needs to be available.

Information in *What Families Want & Need* adapted with permission from:

Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities (1994). *Minnesota speaks out.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Show Transparency 6.1

Discussion 1

As part of your discussion about the importance of involving families in the transition process, use Transparency 6.1 to begin a discussion of the family. Ask students to offer their ideas about what makes a family. List them on the board as they are verbalized.

Appreciating Family Diversity

Working in the schools means that you may be involved with students and families from many different countries, cultures, and economic backgrounds, as well as ability levels. The challenge to educators is to encourage each individual to enjoy his or her difference and to help each person participate fully in all activities (Pickett, 1993). Because paraprofessionals work so closely with students and their families, they must be especially sensitive to and respectful of the differences between themselves and the families with whom they work. The following example describes "differences" that may be seem subtle or invisible to a professional, but are actually very important to the individual:

> Clarence's teacher indicated that she had signed up his entire class to take cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction as part of the requirement of their health course. Clarence couldn't find a way to tell her that his family didn't believe in providing CPR to people who might be dying. They believe that no one should intervene when it's time to die.

Show Transparencies 6.2 and 6.3

Respect the Grief Cycle

Some families will experience grief when they begin to think about their son or daughter entering adulthood. This grief is often brought on by different types of fears that families may experience during the transition process. Understanding these fears will allow you to better support and work more effectively with these families.

Discussion 2

Using Transparency 6.2, discuss the different types of fear that families may experience when their child begins the journey into adulthood. Ask students if they can think of other fears that might be present. Can they think of ways to overcome those fears?

Roles Parents Play in Transition Planning

Parents as Providers of Unique Information

Parents can provide valuable information on the student's personal traits, interests, aptitudes, and behaviors related to their future goals and objectives. Unfortunately, because parents often don't have confidence in their views about the student's abilities, they are often reluctant to tell professionals at IEP meetings and transition-planning meetings what they know about their children. Here are some tips to encourage parent involvement:

- Listen to parents and respond based on their needs and values.
- Provide information to parents to prepare them for their child's IEP meeting.
- Provide a survey or checklist that can be filled out ahead of time and can "speak for" the parent if he or she is reluctant to speak at the meeting.

Discussion 3

Summarize the roles that parents can play in transition planning. If you have time, ask students to suggest additional "tips" under each role.

Parents as Role Models

Parents can have a powerful impact on young people's perceptions of adult life. All too often, young people with disabilities are led to believe, by the way they are treated at school and at home, that it's normal for them to be dependent. Parents need to make a conscious effort to impress upon their children that they can and will have jobs and become independent. Helping young people with disabilities develop appropriate behaviors is related to promoting positive attitudes towards work.

Some tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Suggest that parents take their child to visit their workplace.
- Assist parents to identify jobs that students can do at home.
- Provide information on communication and social skills that parents can work on with their child at home.
- Provide advocacy and transition training so that parents feel comfortable and have a basic understanding of the transition planning process.

Parents as Case Managers

Plans for transition services aren't self-executing. Parents will need to carefully follow the implementation of transition plans and make sure that the good intentions of agreements and collaborative efforts between various agencies are fully met. The tasks of parents may be complicated by the fact that a young person's need for service may extend beyond his or her school years. Unlike a free appropriate public education which is guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there is no entitlement to services for young adults with disabilities. Likewise, there is no single agency responsible for providing services. Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Informing parents of legal rights under special education laws.
- Giving information on services offered by adult service agencies.
- Providing training on the transition-planning process.

Parents as Service Advocates

The full range of services needed for transition is not yet available in most communities. Some school districts still don't provide career and vocational education programs to students enrolled in special education programs. Not all communities have a full range of residential or employment options — including supported work — available for people with disabilities. Consequently, there will continue to be a need for parents and young people themselves to work with service providers, employers, and policy makers to increase the availability of residential and employment options. Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Providing information on parent advocacy and support groups.
- Inviting parents to participate in school and community trânsition-planning meetings and organizations.
- Hooking parents up with other parents who are willing to serve as mentors and provide support throughout the process.

Parents as Advocates for Career Education in School Programs

Career education makes children aware of the variety of different occupations that exists and promotes thinking of themselves in relation to different career options. This stage typically begins in the late elementary years and early junior high school. Both in school and at home, educators and parents need to stress the importance of work, the broad range of work and employment opportunities available, the relationship among different types of work (e.g., job ladders within a company, how workers in professions employ support staff in other occupations), and the personal and economic benefits derived from different types of work. Tips to encourage parent involvement are:

- Suggesting that parents take their child to visit their own work place.
- Encouraging parents to explore career options with their child using newspapers, magazines, television, and movies to stimulate discussion.
- Helping parents to meet and get to know local representatives.

Parents as Risk Takers

Parents are often ambivalent about their son or daughter becoming more independent. They may know that letting go is the best thing, but actually allowing a young person with a disability to take the risks that go with independence may be hard.

Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Emphasizing student strengths and abilities.
- Addressing parents' concerns about the services their child is receiving.
- Including parents in all areas of transition planning and validating their ideas, needs, and vision for their child.
- Focusing on the positive – what the student *can* do.
- Providing information on independent living options: public housing, etc.

Parents as Financial Planners

Quite often, parents and young people with disabilities are faced with a dilemma caused by the fact the eligibility requirements for financial assistance programs create disincentive for person with disabilities to go to work. A typical situation might involve choosing between accepting a minimum wage job with no medical benefits which would lead to the loss of eligibility for Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid, or being content to stay at home with a daily routine lacking in stimulation, opportunities for growth, and the satisfaction that work provides. Decisions of this type involve balancing the need for financial security and the desire for independence. Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Providing accurate information about eligibility requirements of government programs.
- Providing information regarding wills, trusts and guardianships.
- Providing information on all forms of financial aid: amounts, agencies, contact people, etc.

Information in *Roles Parents Play in Transition Planning* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education (1993). *Information for parents of high school students with disabilities on transition to adult life.* (pp. 24-26). St. Paul, MN: Author.

Helping Families Look to the Future: Personal Futures Planning

Personal futures planning is a strategy that is becoming widely used to assist people with and without disabilities in setting personal goals and establishing a vision of the future. The purpose of a personal futures planning session is to provide a process through which young people with disabilities and their families can ask questions and identify the student's capacities, values, and interests.

Personal futures planning occurs when a small group of people who are close to the student (e.g., family members, teachers, friends, neighbors) gather together to offer support while brainstorming and strategizing future goals for the student. This "circle of support" or "person-centered team" makes commitments to carry out actions designed to assist the student in meeting his or her future goals and visions.

The first objective of the personal futures planning process is to develop a profile of the student. This profile covers several areas of the individual's life including history and background, relationships, places in the community, transportation, choices, and preferences. The information obtained from the personal futures planning session serves as a good resource which can be referred back to and used as a guide throughout the student's transition-planning years (See Appendix D for a detailed description of the personal futures planning process).

Information in *Helping Families Look to the Future: Personal Futures Planning* adapted with permission from Abery, B., et. al., (1994). *Self-determination for youth with disabilities: A family education curriculum.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

Activity 1

Write the following two headings on the board or overhead: *Roles played by mother* and *Roles played by father.* Ask the students to call out as many additional roles as they can think of. (These might include nurturer, meal planner, bus driver, housekeeper, etc.).

Summary

This chapter has emphasized the importance of including the student and the student's family in the transition-planning process. We stressed the paraprofessional's role in executing strategies designed to involve students in their own planning process and for encouraging a sense of self-determination. The last part of the chapter was devoted to exploring the ways in which families are involved in the process. As part of our exploration, we looked at the many ways that students might experience a sense of family and at the many different roles that parents can play in transition planning.

Questions to Ponder

- As members of a teaching/helping profession, we often get a sense of satisfaction when we help others or make their lives easier. Can you think of a situation where your desire to help others has contributed to their "learned helplessness" rather than helping them gain a sense of independence? Can you think of any selfish reasons to encourage your students to remain dependent upon you?
- How do you think you will handle the situation when one of your students expresses a desire to make choices that are much different than the choices you would make in the same situation? At what point do you think it would be your responsibility to try to change the student's views?

7

Chapter Seven

Employment

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Introduction

Preparing students to find meaningful and productive employment is one of the most important outcomes of the transition process. This isn't an easy job: it requires ongoing planning and must start early in the student's school career. Minnesota law requires that all students receiving special education services address employment in their Individualized Education Plans by age 14. These goals should be future-oriented and focus on career exploration activities and community work experiences (Wehman, 1992).

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand natural supports in the work environment.
- Become familiar with the concept of job coaching.
- Become familiar with career exploration and work experience options that may be available to your students.
- Begin to develop strategies to assist you in helping your students explore career options and develop and apply job skills.
- Understand the concept of job carving.
- List some of the characteristics that often determine the quality of a particular job for a person who has a disability.

Section 1

The Transition to Employment

The Paraprofessional's Role

Paraprofessionals' roles vary in the area of employment. They may work in the classroom with students as they learn job readiness skills or work one-on-one with students at a work site coaching them on the tasks required to complete a specific job. Job support and workplace training is often referred to as *job coaching*, and it is a common responsibility of paraprofessionals working with transition-aged students. The amount of job coaching necessary depends on the demands of the job as well as the student's skill level. Some students require constant support to complete a job, while others require only periodic visits from their job coach to see how things are going. Ideally, the job coach will gradually fade the amount of support given to the student. This occurs when students begin to learn the skills necessary to complete the tasks themselves. Coworkers and employers may also take on some of the responsibility of supporting students on the job.

Case Studies

As you read the following case studies, think about what is similar and different about the two situations. What might your role as a paraprofessional be in each situation?

Mary

Mary works part time as a mail sorter for a local bank. Her job coach, a paraprofessional named Susan, supports her as she does her job. To help Mary remember the steps of the job, Susan took photographs of Mary doing each task of the job. She then assembled them into a pocket-size photo album which Mary carries with her at work to help remind her of the tasks needed to be done. Using the photo album, Mary no longer needs to ask Susan what to do next. This has dramatically reduced the amount of support and time Susan needs to spend with Mary while greatly increasing Mary's independence and sense of self-esteem on the job.

While Mary was able to complete her mail sorting responsibilities without much support, Susan still had to be at the work site each day to remind Mary to punch her time card immediately before and after work. To solve this problem, Susan talked with Mary's employer who suggested that one of Mary's coworkers could easily help her remember to punch the time clock each day. A coworker with whom Mary works closely happily agreed to assist. By transferring responsibility from the job coach to a coworker, Mary is now working more independently and being supported naturally by her coworkers. Using natural supports, Susan is now able to spend less time with Mary and more time with other students who need her support.

John

John works as a stock person at a local department store. His job responsibilities involve returning merchandise to the shelves. To do this John must pick up the merchandise from the store's two fitting room attendants and from the customer service desk representative. Once John has retrieved the items, he must decide to which department the item belongs by reading the department number on each item's ticket. The last step is to take the item to its appropriate department and return it to the shelf that contains the same items.

John's job coach is currently providing full-time support to him on his job. This is largely because John has a hard time keeping all the items and their departments straight. The job coach also helps John organize the items by department so he doesn't have to make a separate trip for each item. As it stands, John wouldn't be able to do all the work required of him each day without the help of his job coach.

Activity 1

After the students have read the case studies, have them work in small groups to discuss how natural job supports could be used to decrease the support required from the job coach and increase students' independence. After 10 to 15 minutes, have the students share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Available Career Exploration Options

The first step in the career exploration process is for students to begin to learn about themselves — what are their interests and needs? What type of jobs can they imagine performing as adults? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Will their disability affect them in their future jobs? These questions can be answered by:

- Talking informally with students and their families.
- Observing students in real-life work environments.
- Administering formal career exploration surveys.

After students have completed one or more career assessments, they can begin to explore some of the jobs and fields in which they are interested. A few examples of these types of career exploration activities are:

- **Job shadowing:** A student goes into a work site and "shadows" or follows an employee whose job is of interest to them.
- **Visits by professionals:** Individuals from a variety of fields come to the school to describe their jobs and answer students' questions.
- **School-based vocational classes:** Students learn general work related skills such as how to fill out an application, interviewing strategies, and social skills.
- **Reviewing job resources:** Students learn about potential jobs and businesses through resources such as the classified ads and the yellow pages.

Show Transparency 7.1

Discussion 1

Discuss career exploration and work experience by going over some of the options available.

Paraprofessional Strategies

Career Awareness and Exploration: How Can I Best Teach Career Awareness?

- Have the student organize career information into clusters that illustrate various jobs that interest him or her. Identify the amount of training required for each type of job.
- Have students list the generic safety rules of work settings and sites that may have specific standards (e.g., construction work, chemical plants, assembly lines, food service, etc.).
- Have students identify occupational opportunities within the local community by reading the want ads, talking to employers, etc. Invite employers in to discuss their particular job openings.
- Visit various work sites and have students log information about such aspects as duties, pay, benefits, environment, and coworkers of each work site.
- Administer checklists and surveys that help identify personal values and interests as they relate to the world of work.

- Help the student identify the interrelatedness of work and the value of all work to the welfare of society by discussing the workers they come across in any particular day (e.g., bus driver, teacher, store clerk).
- Help the student understand the important and changing contributions of people of color and individuals of diverse backgrounds to the world of work.
- Help the student to understand how an individual's personal traits are related to career choice and eventual occupational satisfaction by sharing (in small groups) three jobs they would like to do and three they wouldn't like and the reasons why.

Creating Career Exploration Experiences

- Role play a job interview and discuss ways to enhance one-on-one meetings with supervisors. Identify important aspects of a successful interview (i.e., looking nice, being on time, shaking hands, communicating clearly, etc.).
- Encourage parents or caregivers to actively participate in preparing the individual for an interview, job placement, or other community work activity by telling their child about their own job-hunting experiences.
- Complete a résumé and log all work experiences, their duration, employer's name and address, amount of pay, job duties, and comments. Update the résumé at the end of exploration activities.
- Help the student acquire occupational information relevant to his or her personal characteristics and career goals by using the Minnesota Career Information System, the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, and *Occupational Outlook*.
- Develop an occupational family tree and share it with other students. Discuss how each individual went about making their career choices.
- Have students role play skills needed for getting and keeping a job. Have them name three reasons an employer would hire them and three reasons that they could get dismissed from a job.
- Have students fill out sample job applications and prepare a date card to keep in their pocket when job hunting.
- Have students name three sources of job availability listings and use one to find job openings in a desired field.

Helping Students Develop and Apply Job Skills

- Help students sign up for vocational classes, set up necessary support, and meet with a vocational instructor to monitor program progress.
- Integrate academic instruction in areas of math, reading, and language arts as much as possible with the student's specific

types of vocational instruction. For example, if the student is in machine shop, teach the math skills for machine shop, obtain a list of vocabulary terms, and have student write a job order.

- Practice job-seeking skills such as applications, interviewing, and writing letters of inquiry in the classroom.
- Use instruction to emphasize improvement in work-related behaviors which should be integrated throughout the skill.
- Teach students access skills for utilizing support systems at their chosen postschool environment (i.e., make a list of questions to ask support people, develop a list of supports they may need, practice calling for appointments, have phone numbers readily available).
- Have students complete a self-evaluation each week while on a job and discuss examples of work skills and behaviors applied during the past week in a small group session with other students.

Information in *Paraprofessional Strategies* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1993). *Teaching the possibilities: Jobs and job training.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Available Work Experience Options

While some work-related skills (e.g., interviewing skills, filling out an application) can be learned in the classroom, the best way to gain a skill is by learning and practicing it on the job. Students should be exposed to a variety of community work experiences before they leave high school. Gaining experiences in multiple work environments gives students an idea of the types of jobs for which they're best suited and helps them make more informed career decisions. Seeing students in different work settings also helps professionals to develop the most appropriate ways to support an individual on the job (Wehman, 1992).

Choosing a job is a very personal decision. It must be made on an individual basis with as much input from the student as possible. It's the paraprofessional's job to provide options and to guide the student to the most appropriate job placement. Some students will prefer short-term, rotating jobs, while others will go directly into permanent, part-time supported employment positions. Levels of support will also vary from student to student. And in some cases, students will prefer not to work in the community. A few examples of these types of work experiences are:

- **Community job try-outs:** The student tries out a job of his/her choice for a predetermined amount of time (e.g., a few weeks).
- **Supported employment:** The student works at least 20 hours per week in a paid position in the community. Ongoing support is usually required throughout the duration of the employment.
- **Individual placement model:** Paid employment in which an employment specialist or job coach helps a person find a job

and trains that person to perform that job. Ongoing support is usually required throughout the duration of employment.

- **Mobile work crew:** A group of individuals work together to perform various types of service jobs in the community. This model is particularly helpful in areas where jobs are scarce. The cost of a job supervisor for the crew, as well as transportation to and from work sites, may be prohibitive.
- **Industrial enclave:** A small group of individuals with disabilities are assigned to work in a business with the assistance of a supervisor for training and support. This can be a cost efficient method because more than one person can work with the assistance of only one supervisor. Drawback: doesn't integrate, not easy to fade support.
- **Postsecondary job training:** Four-year universities, two-year community technical colleges, trade schools, military.
- **Competitive employment:** Professional, skilled, and semiskilled paid work experiences.

Show Transparency 7.2

Discussion 2

Discuss with students the steps involved in creating some jobs. Let the students know that job development is usually done by work experience coordinators, vocational education teachers and other school staff. But, if they are working with employers and students at the job work site, they may have a chance to get involved in these activities. Discuss the idea of "job carving."

How Jobs are Developed for Students with Disabilities

Developing jobs for students with disabilities is generally the responsibility of the school's work experience coordinator or vocational teacher. Once a job is developed, though, it's the paraprofessional who goes into that environment and gets to know its employees and culture. Being part of the work site puts paraprofessionals in a natural position to assess potential work opportunities for students.

Creating Employment Opportunities

- Determine student needs and desires.
- Research target businesses, including personnel, training, retention, competition, and technical issues.
- Visit sample target businesses.
- Inventory activities of typical workers performing target tasks.
- Observe corporate culture, including rules and rituals.
- Task analyze duties and determine consumer capabilities, training, and assistance needs.
- Negotiate with employer.
- Teach and refine tasks.
- Build on typical supports and relationships.
- Fade.
- Maintain a consultative role.

How Jobs are Developed for Students with Disabilities adapted with permission from Wehman, P. (Ed.). (1996). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (2nd ed., p. 179). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624. For more information on job development, contact Cary Griffin, M.A., Director of Training, Rural Institute on Disabilities, 52 Corbin Hall, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.

Job Carving

One excellent technique for creating new jobs for students is through "job carving" (often referred to as "job developing"). This technique involves restructuring or reassigning a job so that students with disabilities can take responsibilities for some of the easier job tasks. Job carving benefits the employer by freeing up his or her higher paid employees to take on more high level responsibilities. Job carving is a way to increase productivity for employers and create new employment opportunities for students with disabilities (Wehman, 1992).

Job Carving at a Welder's Shop

Welder's inventory (nonsequential)	Carved tasks	Interactive & shared tasks
Clock-in	Yes	Yes
Drink coffee and talk	Yes	Yes
Get work orders	Yes	Yes
Design and trouble shoot	No	No
Weld	No	Maybe
Change welding tanks	Yes	Yes
Sort scraps	Yes	Maybe
Carry scraps to recycling	Yes	Sometimes
Clean work area	Yes	Yes
Clean facility	Yes	Maybe
Label stock and supplies	Yes	Yes
Check-in/stock deliveries	Yes	Yes
Talk with customers	No	Maybe
Lunch/breaks: talk and joke	Yes	Yes
Checkout; ride home	Yes	Yes

Job Carving adapted with permission from Wehman, P. (Ed.). (1996). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (2nd ed., p. 185). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624.

Possible Characteristics of a "Quality" Job

Less Desirable	*More Desirable*
Physical Space	
Employees are physically separated from coworkers by walls or barriers.	Workers are in proximity to coworkers without disabilities.
Interactions with Nondisabled Coworkers	
Employees have little or no interactions nondisabled coworkers.	The employee is in contact with nondisabled people at work.
Personnel Status	
Employees are legally employed by the organization.	Employees are legally employed by the support host company.

Pay	Performing labor for no pay is prohibited by the U.S. Dept. of Labor (i.e., no volunteer work).	Wages may be minimum wage or above, or may be based on productivity when commensurate with wages received by nondisabled coworkers.
Benefits	The employee receives no available worker benefits.	Benefits received are on parity with nondisabled coworkers.
Nature of Work	Work is projected to be short-term or in an industry that is considered unstable.	Work is projected to be potentially long term and in a viable industry.
Number of Employees with Disabilities	More than eight people with disabilities are grouped together.	People with disabilities represent approximately one percent of the total work force.
Worker Conditions	Conditions are unsafe, unfriendly, inaccessible, or uncomfortable.	Conditions are safe, friendly, accessible, and comfortable.
Transportation	Employees arrive via segregated bus for people with disabilities.	Employees arrive via car-pools with coworkers or by public transportation.
Work Routines (hours/days worked, break and lunch times)	Routines are different from those of nondisabled workers.	Routines are same as those of coworkers.
Supervision	Manager has low or no skills in training or supervising people with disabilities.	Supervisors understand relevant company procedures, have trained with people with disabilities.
Skills Acquired by the Worker	Skills learned aren't marketable in local industry.	Acquired skills are marketable in local industry.
Enhancing Features (opportunities for increased responsibility, raises, status, upward mobility)	Enhancing features aren't present.	Enhancing features are present.
Employer Agrees to Conditions Necessary for Employing Person with Severe Disabilities	This condition isn't present.	This condition is present.

Support Organization	
The support organization is highly visible within the host company or is a subcontractor.	The support organization maintains low visibility, but assists the company when requested to maintain and support employment (e.g. training other companies, providing behavior management consultation, screening potential employees, maintaining any documentation required by government.)

Possible Characteristics of a "Quality" Job adapted with permission from Wehman, P. (Ed.). (1992). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (p. 213). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624.

Summary

This chapter has illustrated many of the different ways paraprofessionals might be involved in the job planning and acquisition phase of a student's transition. Developing and utilizing natural supports was stressed as a way to help students gain independence. We have offered many strategies for paraprofessional participation in career awareness and exploration activities as well as strategies for helping students develop and apply job skills. We explored some of the most common work options that are currently available for students that have disabilities. The last part of the chapter discussed the concept of "job carving" and discussed some of the characteristics that might make up a quality job environment for students.

Questions to Ponder

- Thinking about careers, looking for work, and starting a new job are always placed at the top of published lists of "stressful life situations." Do you remember how you felt when you began to look for work as a paraprofessional? Do you remember your first day at your current job? What are some ways you can use your own experience to dissipate some of your students' anxiety about this aspect of their transition?
- To what extent was your own search for a job or career done in an organized and systematic way? Has any of the material in this chapter changed your views about how you might approach your next career or job hunt activity?

8

Chapter Eight

Home Living

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Introduction

Transition planning must include goals and activities to prepare students for community living. Students need information on various types of living arrangements from which they can choose, as well as the types of skills necessary to function within these different home living options. The key to successful transition planning in this area is to match the student's independent living skills with his or her desired future living arrangement. This chapter highlights many of the issues paraprofessionals may need to become familiar with as they work with students. It's filled with strategies to help you support students as they learn home living skills.

As you will see, we have only begun to cover many of the important skills and tasks that you may be helping students learn. Entire courses are often devoted to "independent living" issues. We encourage you to seek out additional training if this is one of your interests or needs.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Develop an appreciation of the complexity and individual nature of a student's home living preferences and needs.
- Become familiar with some of the many home living options that may be available to students.
- Learn some strategies to assist you in supporting students as they learn home living skills.

Section 1

Choosing a Home Living Arrangement

Show Transparency 8.1

The Paraprofessional's Role

Much the paraprofessional's work in this area will be carried out in community instructional settings. If a student hopes to share an apartment with a roommate after high school, he or she would probably benefit from learning certain skills in an actual apartment setting. Students who learn and practice domestic living skills in natural environments such as a personal residence or apartment are more likely to obtain and retain those skills than students who merely study about them in school.

When working with students, it's important to listen carefully to their needs and preferences regarding home living. All of us come from homes with unique traditions, values, and lifestyles. As educators, we need to be sensitive to these differences and respect them.

Discussion 1

Lead a discussion on the areas involved in choosing and caring for a home. Emphasize the importance of students making home living choices as independently as possible.

Involving families in developing and working on home living goals will help ensure their personal needs will be honored.

There are many areas that should be considered when assessing the needs of students in the area of home living. Some of these areas include:

- Housing alternatives
- Meal planning
- Housekeeping
- Safety
- Personal care
- Personal development

Available Home Living Options

Brief descriptions of living alternatives frequently available to people with disabilities are listed below. In some instances, it may be necessary to acquire additional training in one type of living situation before moving on into a more desired situation. If this is the case, it's very important for the person (and all those involved with the planning) to realize the training is a necessary step.

At Home with Natural or Foster Parents

For many young adults, living at home with their natural or foster parents is a viable option. The arrangement might very well be a healthy one for both parties. If the parents expect the (older) child to be as independent as possible, share in the responsibilities of running the household, and allow freedom of expression and identity in his or her space, it could be a satisfactory and rewarding experience. However, a critical issue surrounds whether the person has either made the decision to continue to live at home or has at least been actively involved in the decision process.

Foster Care

Foster care is another housing option that utilizes existing family structures: an individual with disabilities lives within the home of non-relatives (in most cases) and becomes part of this family. Adult foster care has become increasingly popular within the realm of community-based services, and systems have been established to financially support these service providers.

Rehabilitation Facilities

A rehabilitation facility is a temporary living alternative designed to assist people with physical disabilities (primarily) to develop the skills necessary to increase their independence. Rehabilitation facilities are mainly designed to serve those who are newly injured with the focus on regaining skills through physical and occupational therapy. A person may sometimes reach preinjury capabilities, but often the person learns an alternative method of performing a specific task. A simple piece of adaptive equipment is often all that is needed to assist the person in functioning more independently.

Supervised Living Environments

A continuum of housing alternatives exists to provide supervision and support to individuals with disabilities. These services are categorized according to the funding source and, in some cases, two programs may appear similar but are classified differently. Applicants to programs must be aware of the discreet differences so that they will know which services they are qualified to receive. Access to these living arrangements is coordinated by county case managers on an individualized basis; however, rising demands for alternative housing programs for individuals with disabilities have so severely depleted many community and county fiscal resources that long waiting lists are now the norm. Anyone considering a move into any of these environments needs a county case manager to provide guidance through the application process.

Intermediate Care Facilities – Mental Retardation (ICF/MR)

These facilities have traditionally been large residential programs serving residents from across wide geographic areas. The programs evolved from the old state hospital system with the large, segregated campuses being renamed regional treatment centers. While the role of these centers (and other institution-like residential programs) has been rapidly changing, large multi-bed facilities are no longer seen as a viable housing option for the vast majority of people with disabilities. Most counties will now only fund new ICF-MR programs with six beds or less to discourage "warehousing" of residents.

Waivered Services

To facilitate the movement from large institution-like facilities to community-based settings, the Minnesota Department of Human Services established an avenue of financial assistance known as waivered services. A variety of residential programs qualify for this funding, ranging from group homes to supervised living services (SLS — typically designed for apartment living). Counties contract with service providers to meet the individual's needs as they are identified within a plan developed by his or her team. The focus of each housing option is on skill development and independence enhancement.

Semi-Independent Living Situations (SILS)

Assistance can also be provided to people with disabilities through semi-independent living situations (SILS). Individualized plans of support are developed and skills necessary for independent living are taught in a variety of settings. An initial program may be located in a group living environment, where all the residents share home management responsibilities. As a person progresses, he or she may move into an apartment and continue to receive support services in targeted skill areas. As independence increases, structured assistance programs decrease. Eventually, the individual comes to rely on naturally occurring systems of supports within the community.

Living With a Roommate or Partner

Living with one or two people results in sharing not only space, but also expenses and responsibilities. The division of these tasks is decided cooperatively by those living together. Roommates have to respect each other's private areas, agree on house rules, and follow through on household responsibilities. The same expectations hold for partners or spouses, yet they are often tempered by the emotional aspects of relationships.

Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is an individual hired to assist with personal needs. Often, the PCA also performs such chores as housekeeping and personal care. In cases where the PCA lives with the employer, the decision must be made whether the living arrangements are considered to be the PCA's home or place of employment. If the PCA considers the arrangements as home, he or she should receive the space and respect given to a roommate or spouse.

Living Alone

Living alone in a house or apartment has many advantages and disadvantages. Such housing provides complete privacy and total freedom to do as one pleases, yet it also means that all the responsibilities for both self-care and home management rest with the individual. Even with a PCA or other contracted assistance, the individual still has total control of the activities within the home environment. Living alone can be an exciting goal for those accustomed to sharing all aspects of their daily lives.

Public Housing

Public housing allows a person with a disability who makes approximately $500 or less per month to obtain an apartment at a lower than standard rate. Rents are about one-third of monthly income. Each county has a public housing authority and an application procedure which needs to be followed. After applying, the person will be put on a waiting list and be contacted when their name is at the top of the list and there's an opening in one of the public housing units for that county. When this occurs, the applicant must accept or refuse the first opening made available. Applicants aren't allowed to choose which public housing unit in which they will live.

Section 8 Housing

Like public housing, Section 8 housing allows a person with a disability who makes approximately $500 or less per month to obtain an apartment at a lower than standard rate. Applicants may go to the county housing authority office to see a listing of apartments that are Section 8 providers. When an individual chooses which housing units they are interested in, they then go to those units and fill out the application for a Section 8 apartment. Section 8 allows individuals to choose the building they want to live in. Unfortunately, waiting lists at each complex are usually long — anywhere from one to six years.

It's advisable to apply for both public housing and Section 8. A person may get a public housing apartment and continue to stay on the waiting list for Section 8 until an opening is available.

Section 2

Supporting Students as They Learn Home Living Skills

There are many different strategies to assist students as they learn home living skills. Because home living is a highly personal area, it's a good idea to solicit the input of parents when deciding on instructional strategies. Families are in the best position to know about their children's strengths in this area and to support them as they develop new skills within the context of their daily family life.

The following are some teaching tips to get you started as you work with students and their families in the area of home living.

Choosing a Place to Live

- Compile a collection of pictures of class members' homes.
- Discuss the elements that make a house a home (i.e., personal belongings, plants, private space, etc.).
- Discuss where students see themselves living in one year and in five years. With whom do they live? What type of dwelling is it? How can they work to achieve these goals?
- Locate such local services or landmarks as bus routes, malls, grocery stores, and medical centers on a map and discuss neighboring/accessible residential areas.
- Invite a landlord to discuss leases, damage deposits, eviction, giving notice prior to moving, and qualities of a good renter.
- Compile a listing of average rents for various-sized apartments

by locations and discuss them.

- Organize a resource list of materials used when looking for a place to live — newspapers, apartment guides, magazines, etc.
- Invite a housing expert from a real estate agency to present information on mortgages, interest rates, application processes, the advantages of renting vs. owning, etc.
- Visit various types of housing facilities and help individuals visualize themselves in those settings.
- Present housing alternatives through a panel of adult residential service providers for parents, young adults with disabilities, and staff.
- Put together a slide or video show of different housing programs located within the local neighborhoods.
- Explore the possibility of having an existing apartment or house adapted with equipment and/or barrier-free modifications so that a specialized living arrangement can be avoided. Contact county housing officials and advocacy groups for information.
- Encourage students (and/or advocates) to address these questions about their home living choices:
  - Did you choose this home and this community? Do you have tenure in your house (a signed lease, ownership, or as a member of the family)? Is the house close to places and activities that attract you? Are the people with whom you share the house people you chose or would choose to live with? Do you feel safe, secure, and comfortable?
  - Are the people with whom you live (family, individuals, or care staff) supported enough so that they will choose to continue to live with you?
  - Are you receiving the personal support you require to live as independently as possible?
  - Is the house near other houses where people live?
  - Is the house a place where friends and family can come to talk privately if need be?

Meals & Nutrition

Meal Planning

- Collect nutritional information from popular fast food restaurants. Discuss the information and make a list of the "healthiest" items from each place. Save this information for comparison with other food items.
- Identify the major food groups and use the groups to plan balanced meals.

- Let individuals look through cookbooks and choose items they would like to cook. Make a grocery list of the ingredients needed, discuss the cost of the item, decide if it's a practical item to prepare (whether it meets the diners' needs, the time it will take to prepare and cook, whether it will serve the number of diners, etc.), determine a sequence of steps to take to follow the recipe, etc.

Purchasing Groceries

- Clip and organize coupons for items commonly used in class cooking projects. Determine how much is saved from the grocery bill when eventually used.
- Check weekly mailers and newspapers for sales or specials. Discuss the relative value of the sale/special item (i.e., original price, whether it's really useful, where the store is located and how convenient it is, what could be substituted for the item — fresh or generic item, etc.).
- Develop exercises to encourage comparison shopping (i.e., price per ounce, buying in bulk quantities, name vs. generic brand, in-season vs. out-of-season, etc.).
- Compile a resource center of information about programs providing assistance to individuals and families unable to purchase groceries due to low income. Local agencies, such as food shelves, and government-related services, such as food stamps, should be discussed and application processes made clear.

Cooking a Meal

- Adapt materials and/or kitchen space to meet needs of individuals with disabilities. Contact manufacturers about acquiring adaptive equipment, design individualized items, consult with an occupational or physical therapist, and check catalogs of rehabilitative equipment.
- Utilize a wide range of appliances and find out what each individual has and uses at home.
- Experience outdoor cooking using a grill and/or camp stove.
- Introduce both individual and group cooking. Have each person plan and cook a breakfast, lunch, or snack for themselves. Encourage each member to be involved in the decision-making processes involved in planning a meal and help each member assume an appropriate preparation task.
- Review kitchen safety rules regularly and acquaint everyone with the location of the first aid kit, smoke alarm, and fire extinguisher.
- Compile a recipe box of individual favorites. Watch newspapers and magazines for recipes and cooking hints.

Storing Food

- Invite a food science or poison control professional in to talk about health hazards related to improper food storage.
- Discuss signs of food poisoning and ways to check food for spoilage.
- Review the different types of plastic bags and containers available for food storage purposes. Discuss ways to seal such items and match storage unit to different types of food.

Keeping a House

Housekeeping: What is It?

- Generate lists of the household chores:
  They currently do
  They don't enjoy doing
  They rely on others to do
  They enjoy doing
- Generate lists of daily housekeeping tasks and discretionary tasks. Discuss and identify areas of personal interpretation. Combine and compare the lists and use as a starting point for discussing needs for support.
- Discuss tolerable levels of disorderliness and uncleanliness.
- Introduce basic skills in housekeeping tasks as directed in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Identify cleaning supplies and organize by purpose (i.e., abrasive cleansers, all-purpose spray cleaners, window cleaners, etc.).
- Explore the costs of contracting to have housekeeping done by private agencies or individuals. Discuss the situations that would make such services worthwhile options (i.e., extended illness, lack of support systems within independent living arrangement, long work hours/little leisure time, group decision to co-pay for service within group living situation, etc.).
- Role play confronting a roommate about his or her level of cleanliness and participation in maintenance responsibilities.

Home Maintenance and Repair

- Keep a list of the telephone numbers of building maintenance personnel and/or management staff near the phone.
- Generate a list of tools needed in a home repair kit and have students put together a kit.
- Using the yellow pages and/or personal referrals, develop a resource listing of repair services, organized by area of expertise (i.e., plumbing, electrical, appliance repair, etc.). Call the services and determine:

  - Their hourly rate
  - Their experience and years in business
  - Whether they are insured, bonded, and licensed
  - Their area of business
  - Their promptness/response rate to a call
- Prior to moving, arrange for an independent inspection of the house through a housing agency or private inspection company.
- Encourage parents to include their son or daughter in repair and maintenance activities around their home. Involvement should be based on participation level most suited to the individual's capabilities.

Decorating a House

- Discuss various decorating ideas using home living magazines.
- Identify and list items needed for each room of a house (i.e., bedroom furniture, kitchen furniture, dishes, pots and pans, silverware, linens and supplies, living room furniture, bathroom towels, etc.).
- Introduce inexpensive decorating ideas and resources for less costly furniture and decor items (i.e., making own curtains, checking furniture warehouse sales and outlets, starting plants from friends' plants, etc.).
- List home decorating safety issues such as not overloading electrical circuits, using decorative candles with supervision, and keeping extension cords out of traffic areas.

Safety Issues

Keeping Yourself Safe

- Simulate strangers coming to the door and calling on the phone through role-playing activities. Identify the amount of information it's safe to disclose at such times.
- Practice asking maintenance people for identification before allowing them to enter.
- Integrate real-life situations into social skills training to help solve problems and determine the correct interpersonal response.
- Discuss abuse and exploitation in honest terms and present steps people can take to report such occurrences, as well as avoid them.
- Provide resources such as Adult/Child Protection contracts, advocacy groups, and support organizations, as well as police agencies.
- Discuss stranger and acquaintance rape. List ways to avoid or minimize dangerous and vulnerable situations.

- Assist individuals in obtaining a picture identification card (these are usually available through the state driver's licensing program) and urge them to carry it at all times. Discuss times when it should be shown (i.e., to a police officer when lost or when writing checks in payment for purchases).
- Tape the appropriate amount of money (coins) to the ID card's back to be used for an emergency telephone call.

Keeping Your Home Safe

- Encourage regular examination of home door and window locks, smoke alarms, spare flashlights, fire extinguishers, electrical extension cords, and circuit breakers to be sure they are in good working condition.
- Develop a checklist of home safety steps to use on a daily basis, monthly or bimonthly basis, and prior to vacations. Include such activities as checking door locks nightly, making sure the oven and stove are turned off after use, clearing sidewalks of ice, replacing smoke alarm batteries, stopping home delivery of mail and newspapers before trips, unplugging electrical appliances like refrigerators, televisions, VCRs, and computers when leaving for extended periods, and giving a neighbor or friend a number where you can be contacted in case of an emergency. This list can be presented in a number of ways: laminated for daily check-off and re-use, in pictorial form for nonreaders, or posted on bulletin boards. It should be individualized to address the particular needs of the person and their homes.
- Identify fire evacuation routes from the classroom, home, and workplace. Regularly review fire safety rules and ways to react when caught in a fire.
- Invite an electric company representative to class to discuss electrical safety and possible hazards within the home.
- Put together a box of candles, candle holders, and matches and keep in a centrally located spot in the home. Keep flashlights throughout the home.
- Discuss safety issues related to using ladders and stools, reaching for and lifting objects, and using common household tools.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers for utility companies near the phone (e.g., gas, electrical, water, furnace, and cable TV provider).
- Ask people to determine if their home's electrical service is on a fuse or circuit system. Invite an electrical maintenance person in to discuss the differences in systems and repair techniques for each.
- Discuss possible reasons for the high incidence of accidents occurring in the home and list some strategies for prevention.

Grooming & Hygiene

Keeping Yourself Clean

- Identify common personal care products and discuss their uses and purposes.
- Invite a health professional to speak on the consequences of poor hygiene.
- Encourage individuals to keep some emergency personal care products in their lockers (toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, deodorant, extra make-up, skin lotion, etc.) These can also be used during any grooming instruction.
- Teach personal care skills in an appropriate location to assure privacy and to encourage generalization across environments (i.e., tooth brushing should be done at a bathroom sink, not in a classroom).
- Access (regular) health classes and consult with health education specialists during program development.

Making Yourself Look Good

- Use magazines and have individuals discuss current fashion. Some may enjoy cutting out pictures and putting together a collage.
- Develop two imaginary, same-aged peers of the class; one takes care to look his or her best and one does not. Generate lists to describe their characteristics, noting the minimal effect money or status has on presenting a well-kept appearance. Describe the reactions of several key groups — employers, parents, friends, and teachers — to each of the imaginary figures.
- Invite a hair stylist into class to discuss hair care, simple and inexpensive hair fashions, and new styles for young men and women.
- Explore personal coloring enhancement using either a guide or consultant to determine the shades which compliment each individual's skin tones and hair color.
- Discuss ways to pamper and boost personal care images — having a manicure, getting a new haircut or style, going to a tanning salon, visiting a salon for a facial or doing one at home.

Choosing Clothes and Shoes

- Substitute Velcro for buttons.
- Attach string to zippers.
- Replace shoestrings with elastic or purchase shoes with Velcro closures.
- Avoid wide legs or sleeves which may get caught in wheelchairs.
- Wear tops made of non-pulling fabric if using crutches.

- Consider pleats and raglan sleeves for greater movement.
- Remember that woven fabrics slide over braces easier than knits.
- Discuss the different types of clothes appropriate for different activities — parties, school, work, dances, recreation programs, church, etc. Pair up the activities and outfits. Some pairs will be very different (i.e., church and parties) while some may be quite similar (i.e., recreation and school).
- List jobs that have dress codes and define what would be included in each situation. Discuss why certain occupations have specific restrictions on worker apparel.
- Encourage individuals to keep a card with their clothing and shoe sizes in their wallets to assist with shopping.
- Using magazines of current fashion, ask young people to examine current trends and styles. Discuss the longevity of some styles and others that may be short-lived. Stress the importance of evaluating clothing and shoe purchases in relation to how long it may or may not be in style and identify ways to make stylish and economical purchases.
- Identify seasonal clothes factors and discuss dressing for the weather. List items of clothing appropriate for more than one season and ways to extend wardrobes (i.e., layering, color coordination, multi-purpose shoes, etc.).
- Discuss trying on clothes at a store, including proper manners (closing curtain, putting items back on hanger, taking care not to soil item, etc.)
- Encourage individuals to save their receipts after making a purchase in case a return is necessary.
- Identify the location of care instructions on garments being worn by the individuals. Discuss what the instructions mean and the implications in regard to cost and ease of care.
- Access (regular) consumer homemaking classes for training in sewing and creating clothes.
- Demonstrate correct usage of washers and dryers, including commercial machines (i.e., coin-operated).
- Demonstrate safe usage of irons.
- Identify the use of various washing products — fabric softener, bleach, detergent (powder and liquid), dryer sheets, starch, stain remover, etc.

Personal Development

- Identify what it's like to be growing up. Encourage individuals to reminisce about what they were like when younger, what types of things were important to them, and how they interacted with others. Have them compare those behaviors and values to what they do and feel now, and how current perceptions may change through the years ahead.

- Develop methods so that everyone can express basic needs and wants (verbal, written, pictorial, sign, etc.).
- Consult with parents or caregivers to ascertain what type of information they would like to have addressed in the area of personal development. A questionnaire or survey might get general information that can be followed up with personal conversation and discussion.

What Influences Personal Development?

- List ways society influences the behavior of young people. Highlight subtle messages given through media presentations of idealized youth.
- Identify positive and negative images that may be pushed upon young people be external forces (e.g., being thin, smoking, drinking, doing drugs, wearing the "right" clothes, staying in school, etc.). Distinguish steps young people can take to assert control over these messages and their influences.
- Examine the roles parents play in the lives of young people with disabilities. Have them develop a composite of each parent/caregiver, including what the person does or does not do on their behalf.
- Encourage hostility-free discussions of ways they can more fully communicate with each other.

Interactions with Others

Stranger? Acquaintance? Friend? Loved One?

- Using people particular to each individual's life, have them label the people as "stranger," "acquaintance," friend," or "loved one." This may work more effectively with photographs of each person.
- Expand on the above classifications by asking for a description or demonstration of the interactions appropriate to that type of relationship.
- Role play making introductions and meeting new people.
- List ways people treat friends. Discuss how friendships form and how they sometimes end.
- Play charades using interaction behaviors such as "courteous," "rude," "friendly," "lonely," "polite," etc. Rules can be modified to allow words and interaction with another player.
- Identify places and ways to meet new people. Discuss the pros and cons of each opportunity and things to watch out for when with unfamiliar people (i.e., date or acquaintance rape).

- Introduce correct telephone usage and ways the phone can be used to establish and maintain friendships.
- Role play asking people to visit, go to a movie, play a game, etc.
- Discuss appropriate times to call friends.

What is Appropriate Social-Sexual Behavior?

- Ascertain what social-sexual topics the parents are comfortable with having the school address. If a curriculum is being developed, it may be helpful to establish a work group to discuss content area. The work group could include teachers, parents, administrators, students, and possibly a health educator or other professional with a background in human sexuality education.
- A needs assessment addressing topics of social-sexual education could be given to young adults with and without disabilities. Questions could focus on areas such as dating, birth control, disease information, relationship development, sexual orientation, and parenting. Respondents should indicate their age and sex, but no identifying information. Results could be analyzed to determine instructional emphasis.
- List sexually transmitted diseases, their cause, transmission, and long-term effects. Discuss ways to avoid transmission and what to do if signs of infection appear (i.e., symptoms, types of testing, and agencies providing testing).
- Identify qualities of "ideal" boyfriends or girlfriends. Discuss why these qualities are important and the ways two people complement each other.
- Provide general terms such as *romantic, attractive, boyfriend, girlfriend, steady relationship, intercourse, kissing, intimacy*, etc. List alternative, slang terms for the same words. Discuss the connotations and meanings of the slang terms.
- Invite a health professional in to discuss pregnancy, childbirth, and various forms of birth control.
- Designate behaviors as "public" or "private" and present pictures of various behaviors or interactions to be labeled.
- Discuss personal boundaries and how to recognize appropriate distances (i.e., personal space).
- Identify times when a friend was/is counted on for support.
- Role play assertive requests for items or privileges from parents, friends, caregivers, teachers, siblings, and service providers.

Activity 1

Have each student make a list of all the activities they must complete in order to function each day (shower, brush teeth, etc.). Instruct them to start with the moment they get up and end with the last thing they accomplish before they go to bed at night. After taking 5 to 10 minutes to complete the list, ask the class members to respond to the following questions:

- What would happen if these things weren't done?
- How do these activities help you to have a successful day?
- Which of these activities would a young adult need to learn to be successful in living independently?
- How could a young adult learn these things?

Adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1990). *Teaching the possibilities: Home living*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

As a paraprofessional, you may play many roles in a student's transition to community living. Because one of your main roles may be as an information provider, it's important that you're aware of the community living options presented in this chapter. You may also find that you're an important source of both formal and informal support for students during this time. This chapter has presented a wealth of suggestions about how to provide that support. Students' decisions about where and how they will live may be the single biggest decision they are faced with at this stage of their lives. For this reason, it's particularly important that you listen carefully to students and respect their individual needs and preferences.

Questions to Ponder

- Students may be presented with many options for how and where to live. As an adult, do you think that a new living situation should provide a mostly comfortable experience or a mostly challenging experience? Will you be able to separate your preferences in this regard from the preferences of your students?
- After reading this chapter, you may have a new appreciation for the number of little decisions that you make and the number of activities that constitute a day in your life. How many of those activities would you consider "absolutely necessary" in order to live independently? Can you get that list small enough that you feel you could teach them all to a young adult?

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Chapter Nine

Postsecondary Education

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Introduction

To succeed in a postsecondary setting, students must learn to function without many of the supports they were used to receiving from their high school. To do this, they must begin to develop new skills that will foster the maturity and independence they'll need to survive as adult students. Acquisition of the skills described in this chapter — self-advocacy, understanding strengths and limitations, social interactions, self-monitoring, time management, study skills, and problem solving — will prove invaluable for students who decide to move into a formal education or training program after high school.

This chapter begins by offering a few strategies for paraprofessionals assisting students to acquire knowledge and skill in each of these areas. We will also explore some of the unique accommodations that students with disabilities may require to ensure their full participation in a postsecondary setting. Lastly, we will provide an overview of the postsecondary education and training options available to students as they leave a high school setting.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Acquire strategies in the areas of understanding strengths and limitations, self-advocacy, social interactions, self-monitoring, time management, study skills, and problem solving to assist students in preparation for postsecondary education.
- Recognize and be able to generate appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities entering postsecondary settings.
- Be familiar with common education and training options available to students after high school.

Section 1

Planning for Postsecondary Education & Training

Show Transparency 9.1

When working with students who are planning for postsecondary education and training, it's especially important to give them as much freedom and responsibility as possible. The more opportunities students are given to self-advocate and attend to their own needs, the better off they'll be when they enter the postsecondary world. Paraprofessionals who work closely with students in this planning process should carefully prepare the student for what is involved and expected in various postsecondary education and training programs. The following are a few teaching tips to assist students make this important transition.

Paraprofessional Strategies in Planning for Postsecondary Education & Training

Understanding Strengths and Limitations and Learning Styles

- Help individual students generate a list of strengths and limitations. Discuss student characteristics as they pertain to success in postsecondary education and training settings.
- Discuss different learning styles with students and help them determine ways they learn best.
- Teach students about the common characteristics of a variety of disabilities. Invite former students with those disabilities to talk to students about their strengths and limitations in postsecondary education.

Finding Support in Areas of Limitation

- Identify available community resources and support organizations for people with specific limitations and disability issues. Help students collect this information and add it to their personal transition files.
- Help students organize a personal transition file that can be used in the postsecondary application process. Following is a list of possible areas to include:
    - **Personal information:** Name, address, telephone number, emergency contacts, pertinent medical information, description of disability, list of strengths and weaknesses, financial support, vulnerability issues.
    - **School information:** Program descriptions, a copy of the last Individual Education Plan (IEP) and IEP goal areas, progress reports, recent assessment results, learning styles, accommodations needed, special concerns, long-range goals, and documentation of the disability.
    - **Vocational information:** Work experiences, levels and types of support, special concerns, long-range goals.
    - **Residential information:** Type of living arrangement, level of independence, accommodations, special concerns, long-range goals.
    - **Recreational/leisure information:** Preferred activities, club memberships, identified community programs and sponsors, accommodations, special concerns, long-range goals.
    - **Transportation information:** Current mode of transportation, community accessibility issues, costs, accommodations, impact on long-range goals.
    - **Advocacy and support services:** Community support services and advocacy groups, current membership and participation, long-range goals.

Self-Advocacy

- Define and discuss *self-advocacy*. Ask each individual to describe an incident where self-advocacy was or could be needed.
- Define *assertive behavior, aggressive behavior,* and *passive behavior,* and ask students to give examples of each. Role play a situation three different ways, using each type of behavior as a response, and discuss the results of each. Mock situations can include such incidents as being denied a service due to a disability, working out an alternative test-taking system with an instructor, and discussing postsecondary plans with parents who have differing viewpoints.

Student Participation on IEP/Transition Planning Teams

- Discuss the importance of the IEP with students and describe their roles on the IEP/transition planning team. Stress the impact of team decisions and the need for students to attend and participate in these planning meetings.
- Prior to IEP/transition planning meetings, discuss aspects of the transition-planning process with students and help them gather information that they can present to team members. Implement a student-centered planning strategy, such as the I-PLAN (developed by A.K. Van Reusen and C.S. Bos and described in *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Summer, 1990). Encourage active involvement by students in all levels of planning and program implementation.
- Help students determine long-term goals and have them list what they think they might be doing in one, five, and ten years. Encourage them to be as descriptive and creative as possible, listing job titles, annual income, home location, marital status, and leisure activities. Then determine the types of education and support needed to reach these goals. Discuss this time line in relation to IEP/transition planning.

Student Self-Advocacy for Their Rights as Citizens

- Inform students of rehabilitation and disability rights legislation. Discuss the impact of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Identify the personal responsibilities associated with these laws and ways to determine if a violation has occurred. Help students identify who to contact if their rights have been violated.
- Define and discuss *discrimination*. Identify ways that groups of people, especially those with disabilities, may be discriminated against. Ask students to talk about times that they have felt discriminated against.
- Role play an initial interview with admissions personnel at a postsecondary school. Identify the materials and types of infor-

mation that should be shared at this interview. Review questions that may be asked and appropriate responses. Also, generate questions that could be discriminatory and could violate an individual's civil rights. Discuss ways that interviewees can advocate for their rights in these situations. Develop guidelines on how to safeguard against discrimination while still disclosing the information needed to access specific programs, support, accommodations, and financial aid.

Student Advocacy for Accommodations in Postsecondary Settings

- Define *reasonable accommodations.* Help students identify accommodations they currently use and those that they will need to be successful as postsecondary students.
- Provide students with information on accommodations and support available in most postsecondary institutions. Role play ways to respond to situations where accommodations needed and requested are denied because of cost and inconvenience.

Social Interaction

How Do People Interact Nonverbally?

- Identify nonverbal modes of communication, such as eye contact, posture, and facial expression. Demonstrate ways to present a message, both positively and negatively, without speaking.
- Videotape students in role-playing situations where they need to convey a variety of messages and discuss the impact of nonverbal signals. Discuss ways these signals can bolster or impede communication.

What is Social Etiquette?

- Implement a systematic social skills program dealing with areas like manners, private and public behavior, and self-control.
- Develop a list of socially acceptable manners and when they can be used across a variety of settings and situations.

How Can Students Meet New People?

- Role play meeting new people in a class, at a party, or in the community. Teach students how to initiate conversations and relationships. Teach students how to request information using the phone and in person. Allow students to ask for information when it's needed.
- Identify characteristics of a good roommate and make a list of things to consider when choosing a roommate. Discuss concerns about sharing living space, strategies for dividing chores and expenses, and how to assure privacy.

Self-Monitoring

Monitoring Tasks and Goals

- After students have completed a task, ask them to rate their performance based on quality of work, accuracy, timeliness, etc. Compare teacher and student ratings and discuss areas of discrepancy.
- Encourage students to regularly review their own performance on several daily tasks.
- Periodically invite students to assess the progress they have made on their transition goals. Determine if new objectives and/or methods need to be considered.

Monitoring Your Own Behavior

- Help students reward themselves for a job well done. Then review the pitfalls and failures that are a part of one's life. Help students look beyond their failures.
- Discuss ineffective ways to self-monitor, such as constantly comparing oneself to others, setting unrealistic goals, and relying on others for all reinforcement.

Time Management

Managing Daily Activities

- Encourage students to wear a watch. For students who have difficulty telling time, a watch with an alarm function may be helpful. Discuss the importance of keeping track of time throughout the day.
- List daily responsibilities on a "to do" list.
- Help students coordinate a schedule for their entire day, including school, work, leisure and recreation activities, and home.
- Help students decide whether they are "morning" or "night" people and discuss the impact of energy on daily activities.

Prioritizing Tasks and Responsibilities

- Develop strategies for prioritizing tasks and responsibilities. List questions to ask when deciding which tasks should be completed first. Discuss ways to handle conflicting and overlapping activities.
- Help students combine activities that have common elements such as person or place.
- Identify common time wasters and ways to avoid them.

Managing Long-Term Time Commitments

- Teach students to keep a calendar of important deadlines, due dates, and other information. Use school and community calendars as examples.
- Help students plan a long-term project. Break the project down into a series of tasks, each with its own timeline. Mark timelines and progress on a calendar.
- Invite students to keep a daily diary for a month. Have them note what they did and how long each activity took. Evaluate and discuss.

Study Skills

Assessing Skills and Habits

- Discuss the importance of taking notes and outlining. Provide students with opportunities to develop these skills through their daily class work.
- Teach students to highlight the main ideas within texts and notes. Determine which methods work best for each student.
- Teach students to use such reference materials as a dictionary and thesaurus when studying. Identify study guides, glossaries, sample problems, and other study assistance within a textbook.
- Invite a student who is currently enrolled in a postsecondary school to discuss the differences between studying for high school and postsecondary courses. Ask the student to provide tips on how to prepare for postsecondary course demands.
- Discuss how different types of examinations require different types of preparation. For example, students study differently for multiple choice versus essay exams and for weekly quizzes versus a comprehensive final exam.

Getting Organized

- Encourage students to designate a spot in their home for studying. List the supplies needed for this space (for example, a light and a flat surface for writing). Discuss possible distractions in this study space.
- Make a list of school supplies needed in postsecondary settings.
- Ask each student to design a personal study plan, keeping in mind personal preferences for study conditions, times, and methods.

Learning About Study Groups

- Encourage the formation of study groups and discuss their advantages and disadvantages. Teach strategies these groups could use to maximize learning for all members.

- Pair students up with study partners in class. Have them compare notes, review materials, outline texts, and quiz each other.

Problem Solving

Some Strategies for Problem Solving

- Give students opportunities to practice stating problems clearly and concisely.
- Help students identify their personal priorities and things that they value. Teach them to use this list when solving a problem.
- Teach students to make a list of "pros" and "cons" to use when solving a problem. Practice this method on simple decisions such as deciding what to wear, and more complex problems such as choosing a postsecondary school.
- Role play situations that focus on specific problems students may face in postsecondary settings. Ask students to list possible solutions and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Examples may include missing the bus on the day of an exam, being asked to work late the night before a project is due, becoming ill and having to miss class, running out of money, and revising a class schedule when a desired course is unavailable.

Getting Help Solving Problems

- Define *peer pressure* and the influence it may have over problem-solving capability.
- Discuss current problems privately with individual students and help them arrive at a positive solution.
- Discuss harmful and ineffective ways to address problems like drinking and drug abuse, quitting or running away, eating disorders, withdrawal, vandalism, and other destructive behaviors.
- Help students develop a list of people, resources, and information that may help them make decisions and solve problems.
- Help students gather information about resources that can provide relief for stress such as exercise classes, health clubs, creative arts programs, support groups, crisis hotlines, relaxation training, and mental health services.

Accommodations for Students in Postsecondary Education & Training Settings

Students with disabilities often need postsecondary programs modified in order to be successful. In order to arrange program modifications, the postsecondary institutions require verification of a disability. Students diagnosed as having disabilities but no longer receiving special education services in high school are eligible for support and accommodations at the postsecondary level.

According to federal legislation, the right to reasonable accommodations is guaranteed for every individual with a disability. Specific accommodations should be identified while students are still in high school. Assistance can be gained from personnel at an office for students with disabilities at most postsecondary schools when making arrangements for accommodations with faculty for a specific course.

The office for students with disabilities is provided by the postsecondary institution to promote program and physical access which protects the rights of students with disabilities and assists the school with meeting its obligations under federal and state statutes. The office for students with disabilities works to provide or arrange accommodations to ensure access to programs and facilities, improve the understanding and support of the campus environment towards individuals with disabilities, and increase the enrollment and retention of students with disabilities. All of this is accomplished by providing students with disabilities access to the same learning opportunities as nondisabled students.

Three broad categories of adaptations that may be helpful to students are outlined below with some examples of accommodations that can be made:

Course Preparation

- Early registration
- Early syllabus
- Detailed syllabus
- Early text availability
- Classroom location
- Special seating arrangements

Skills Development

- Basic academic skills development
- Word processing
- Library assistance
- Help with writing papers
- Time management
- Stress management

Classroom Adaptations

- Interpreters
- PA system amplification (Telex, Phonic Ear)
- Taped lectures
- Note takers
- Lab aide, partner
- Alternate assignments, extended deadlines

Activity 1

Using the accommodations listed in this section as a guide, have students form small groups to brainstorm other accommodations that might be helpful to students in each of the three categories. When they're finished, bring the entire class back together and write their suggestions, underneath the tree headings, on the board or overhead.

- Taped textbooks
- Tutoring
- Adapted testing: time extensions, quiet space, reader/scribe, alternate format, taped exam, oral exam
- Calculator use in class
- Misspellings not penalized

Section 2

Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Disabilities

Each type of postsecondary education and training setting offers different programs and courses to meet a great variety of career goals. Potential postsecondary students should learn about programs in their interest area and types of services available to meet their needs. A careful review of the information collected about a student's strengths and limitations will also help students decide on whether a particular program is suited to their future goals.

This information may be gained from high school guidance counselors, vocational education teachers, work experience coordinators, or counselors from the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Postsecondary education and training institutions are obligated to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Each school has an affirmative action or 504 officer responsible for arranging accommodations. Many schools have specific offices for students with disabilities where supports are arranged and provided.

Technical Colleges

Technical colleges offer students opportunities to receive training in a specific occupational area with employment as the training goal. These programs are often reflective of an actual workplace with vocational skills and behaviors monitored closely (i.e., attendance, punctuality, self-improvement, attitudes, and independence). Programs vary in length from a few months to two years. Students who successfully complete a program may earn an Associate of Applied Science Degree or a specific certification or license, depending on their program. Programs may often be modified so that students with disabilities can obtain the skills needed for their desired career without officially completing an entire program.

Students who plan to attend a technical college should choose courses in their high school curriculum that apply to their career interests. Individuals may want to consider a program called "Two Plus Two." This program links the last two years of high school with the first two years of a postsecondary program. Another program that has evolved to facilitate the transition between high school and postsecondary education is called "Tech Prep." The premise of Tech Prep is that many secondary students aren't successful in typical academic high school programs. This program seeks to provide these individuals with a strong background in applied academics and basic vocational education while in high school. Then, a postsecondary program picks up where the high school program left off (without duplication) and offers competency-based training in a specific vocational area. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 has supplied grant money for several Tech Prep demonstration projects in Minnesota.

Community Colleges

Community colleges offer programs that culminate with either a certificate or Associate of Arts degree. These programs often provide liberal arts programs, giving students an opportunity to eventually complete a four-year degree at a college or university. They often have transfer agreements with state colleges and universities. Many community colleges now include vocational and occupational skills programs that lead directly to a job. They offer a variety of services for students with disabilities. Admission is open to anyone who has earned a high school diploma, holds a GED certificate, or whose class has graduated from high school. Some programs require additional qualifications or prerequisites because of specialized content, and some have enrollment limits.

College & Universities

Individuals who choose to attend a college or university usually intend to pursue a professional career. Potential students may have a specific career goal or just some ideas about the direction in which they would like to head. In either situation, it's important for potential students to review and evaluate several aspects of the colleges and universities that offer degrees in their interest areas. Colleges and universities offer several types of programs. Universities are usually quite large and offer undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Colleges are usually smaller and focus more on undergraduate training. Tuition varies greatly, with public institutions costing less due to tax revenue subsidies. Some schools are designed to meet the unique needs of a specific population. For example, Gallaudet University provides educational services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The University of Minnesota offers programs leading to associate, baccalaureate, graduate and professional degrees. Students are expected to have completed certain courses before entering the University. Individual colleges, schools, or institutes of the University specify grade and test score requirements for admission. There are several campuses throughout Minnesota, including Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and the Twin Cities, with a total of 53,000 full-time students.

State Colleges

Minnesota's state universities have seven campuses statewide, ranging in size from 3,000 to 16,000 students. Bachelor and master degree programs are available in over 100 subject areas.

Private Colleges

Private colleges have admissions standards that vary, and acceptance is based on some combination of performance in high school, scores from the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and/or the American College Testing Assessment (ACT), and often a written essay or letter of recommendation. Minnesota's private colleges enroll a diverse student body and 80 percent of the students currently receive financial aid.

A high school counselor or teacher who is familiar with college and university planning can be consulted to help individuals collect information about admission to a college or university. Once individuals have chosen the colleges or universities to which they want to apply, preparation for admission should begin. High school courses should emphasize academic and liberal arts areas. Some students with disabilities may need accommodations in these courses while in high school to maximize their level of participation and success.

While academics receive the primary focus during the admission process, high school extracurricular and community activities also receive consideration. Information about these activities should be included on applications and in interviews. Many postsecondary institutions offer scholarships and other forms of financial assistance for students who have demonstrated exceptional scholastic, creative, athletic, or leadership qualities.

Many colleges and universities require potential students to complete entrance examinations. These examinations are usually taken during high school and may require some preparation. Students may want to consider accessing books and workshops that describe the protocol and format of specific tests and provide information on effective test-taking techniques. Prearranged accommodations can be made for students with disabilities who register for the SAT and ACT with proof of disability and a verified need for accommodations. These accommodations may include increased time to take the test, having the test read or on tape, assistance with marking answers, and large print materials.

Other Postsecondary Education & Training Options

There are several education and training options available to individuals whose career goals don't fit within the confines of programs offered at colleges, technical colleges, or universities. Programs to explore include trade schools, community education, apprenticeship, military service, and vocational and habilitation programs. Students should be encouraged to collect information about several programs. Personal interviews and site visits are highly recommended.

For some people with disabilities, creative programs can be collectively designed with the assistance of their transition team and other family and community members. For example, a specialized vocational training program may be an appropriate choice for individuals who have chosen careers that require more focused, specialized training. These programs may include careers in cosmetology, business, electronics, sales, paralegal services, health care, and others. Many of these programs are offered through private schools that are accredited and licensed by the specific professional associations responsible for monitoring and training. Most of the instructors have direct experience in the field and can offer invaluable insight and advice, with on-the-job training available.

Information in *Other Postsecondary Education & Training Options* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1992) *Teaching the possibilities: Postsecondary education and training*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

As we contemplate assisting students with disabilities in making the transition into a postsecondary environment, we can't help but develop a deeper understanding of how multifaceted this transition can be. The first step in planning for this transition is often an assessment of a student's skills and knowledge. The next step may be to provide appropriate training to foster the necessary maturity and independence for the student to thrive in his or her next setting.

Students entering postsecondary settings may require some accommodations in order to fully participate and succeed. Paraprofessionals can be an important source of assistance and support as students plan for desired accommodations and then self-advocate for their provision.

This chapter has highlighted some common issues associated with the "school-to-school" transition. As we have seen, there are many postsecondary options available for students with disabilities. As students consider their options and plan for the future, paraprofessionals can be instrumental in providing information, support, and assistance.

Questions to Ponder

- This chapter started by elaborating on six skill areas that are invaluable to students as they enter formal education or training after high school. Are these six skill areas unique requirements of postsecondary institutions? Can you think of ways that these skills help you and your students to grow and learn in other areas of life?
- Have you participated in any postsecondary education? Do you remember the feelings that you had as you began this new level of training? Looking back, what kinds of assistance and support would have made the transition easier for you?
- Spend some time thinking about the relative advantages and disadvantages of large vs. small postsecondary institutions. In general, larger institutions have a larger resource base to accommodate people with disabilities but can also be more socially overwhelming. Smaller schools might feel more personal and friendly for a student but be less willing or able to accommodate any special requirements. How can a student weigh these differences when making postsecondary education choices?

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Chapter Ten

Community Participation

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92 **Summary**

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Introduction

To achieve independence as adults, students must be knowledgeable about the resources available in their communities and have the skills to access them. Students must identify their basic needs and then work to develop a "working knowledge" of the resources they will regularly need to live independently as adults.

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Begin to develop some strategies for teaching students how to access their community in the areas of transportation, financial planning, medical and dental care, and consumer awareness.

Show Transparency 10.1

Discussion 1

Lead a discussion on various aspects of community participation. Ask students to come up with additional areas that might fall under the broad topic of "community participation."

Section 1

Strategies for Fostering Community Participation

Most of the paraprofessional's work in this area will be carried out in the community. This often involves accompanying a student as he or she learns such skills as using an automatic teller machine, purchasing clothes or groceries, or riding the bus. All of these activities are time-consuming and often require that you practice them on many different occasions to be sure the student has truly mastered the task to the best of his or her ability.

Paraprofessionals should check their school's policy on transporting students off campus. Liability issues may prohibit you from using your own vehicle to drive to a community learning site. If possible, use public transportation for these types of activities. Using a mass transit system can be a wonderful learning experience in and of itself.

Transportation

Getting from one place to another can be very difficult for students with disabilities who don't drive. Learning about transportation options and how to use them is a crucial part learning to access one's community. Here are some tips for using public transportation:

- Assist students to learn bus routes using schedules and the bus company as resources.
- Ride the bus with students, walking them through the steps until they can do it themselves. Once you think they can do it on their own, follow along in your car as they take their first few rides alone.

- Assist students in asking for directions before they embark on a trip and also if they get lost.
- Role play a situation where the student gets lost. Identify appropriate people to ask for help.

Here are some tips for using private transportation:

- Explain how carpools can be arranged and used when you travel to and from the same area with other people. Brainstorm with students on where they could use carpooling in their lives.
- Explore options by calling or visiting companies and local organizations that provide transportation services such as local Arcs or paratransit services.
- List taxi services and phone numbers for students, including prices to and from their most common destinations.

Medical & Dental Care

Here are some tips for getting help for illness or injury:

- Encourage the carrying of an emergency medical information card at all times. These cards should include the person's address, telephone number, emergency contacts, doctor's/dentist's names and numbers, preferred hospital, blood type, insurance/medical assistance information (including number), allergies, existing medical conditions, and special considerations (i.e., uses sign language, wears leg brace, may become anxious, etc.).
- Develop an open enrollment program with the high school or Red Cross health/first aid instructor and integrate students into existing courses, with support, if necessary.
- List symptoms of illness that are valid excuses for staying home from school or work. For each symptom, give an example of the type of care needed to address it and draw attention to the symptoms that require the involvement of medical and dental professionals.
- Invite a community health nurse in to discuss infectious diseases and ways to minimize risk of exposure.
- Introduce common and serious diseases and distinguish between the levels of care available. Major diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and AIDS should receive comprehensive coverage, with local health professionals invited in to provide current information.
- Discuss medical insurance and the rising cost of care. Provide information about various options such as health maintenance organizations, Medicaid, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, etc.

- Encourage self-advocacy and assertive communication styles. Role play positive and negative doctor/patient interactions.
- Review emergency procedures (i.e., when to call 911).

Getting and Using Medications

- For people using medications daily, develop a chart to remind them of the times and dosages. This can be done pictorially and/or can accompany a medication administering box with each day's pills laid out in separate compartments (these can also be done for an entire week).
- Invite a pharmacist to speak about his or her role and responsibilities, the difference between over-the-counter and prescription drugs, cautions to take with medication, the emergence of generic drugs, and other topics.
- List the basic medications and first aid supplies to include in a home first aid kit. Describe the proper use of each item.
- Discuss medication expiration dates, dosage levels, special instructions (such as "take with milk," "take two hours after meal or four hours prior to meal," "take all medication unless instructed otherwise by physician," etc.), and warnings concerning mixing medication with alcohol, taking when pregnant or nursing, combining with other drugs, or using when under treatment for certain chronic health conditions (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, or heart disease).

Finding/Choosing a Doctor or Dentist

- Compile a resource center of information to assist people with disabilities in locating doctors and dentists in their area. Give contacts for referral services coordinated through hospitals, advocacy groups, or health maintenance organizations.
- Discuss the restrictions placed on choosing a doctor/dentist by various health insurance groups and the differences such groups may have in payment for services. Use actual forms needed to procure the payment.
- Provide information about mental health services and ways to access public and private service providers. Invite a clinical psychologist to discuss types of care (inpatient, outpatient, group therapy, individual therapy, etc.), and ways to access programs.

Making Health Care Appointments

- Role play making appointments for doctor and dentist visits. Remember to have medical record numbers handy for those people with health maintenance coverage.
- Identify the issues to address when visiting a doctor or dentist and rehearse expressing these concerns to medical personnel.
- Discuss the costs of medical and dental care and the importance of having insurance coverage.

- Explore ways medical coverage can be obtained, including having an insurance policy through an employer, carrying an individual policy, being included on a parent's policy, having medical assistance, and accessing community health services.

Receiving Financial Assistance for Medical Needs

- Medical Assistance (MA) is a state-funded program designed to alleviate medical costs for eligible recipients. The program pays for such things as medical office visits, prescriptions, glasses, hospital and nursing home care, therapies, hearing aids, and medical equipment. In addition, a person's MA monies are often used to cover supervised housing placements (i.e., licensed group homes) and to pay for a personal care assistant. Those Minnesota residents receiving Social Security benefits automatically qualify for MA funding. If they are currently ineligible for SSI, they may be able to receive MA later when they are 21 years old. If SSI checks are reduced or discontinued (commonly due to an increase in income), the recipients may be able to continue their MA coverage. (Income ceilings are higher for MA eligibility.) If a person's income is above eligibility levels, but monthly medical bills are high in relation to the income, the individual may qualify for a spend down. This allows for a sharing of medical costs, with the person paying for part of it and MA paying the rest. In addition, after SSI or SSDI cash benefits end, an individual can still be eligible for assistance if high medical expenses are common. Attendant care, prescriptions, and special equipment may qualify as work-related expenses.

Consumer Awareness

What Is Consumer Awareness?

- Choose several items and research their quality ratings through consumer magazines.
- Determine the best buy for the money and distinguish the factors leading to that decision.
- Develop exercises using mail order catalogs, having young people fill out the forms and figure additional costs, such as tax, postage, and handling.
- List quality indicators to look for when buying:
    - Clothes
    - Shoes
    - Electrical appliances
    - Furniture
    - Cars
    - Plants

  - Food (e.g., fresh vegetables and meat)
  - Homes/apartments
- Identify ways in which the cheapest deal may not always be the best deal for the money.

Why We Need Consumer Protection

- Describe situations when a consumer advocacy organization may be needed.
- Develop a list of consumer rights and ways to protect these rights.
- Practice writing or calling a vendor whose product/service was less than satisfactory.
- Role play ways to confront a salesperson with faulty merchandise, stressing assertive communication skills.

Financial Planning

Getting Money

- Invite a county case manager to present information about various financial assistance programs to students and parents.

Budget Your Money

- Assist the student to determine whether the following are income, fixed or flexible expenses:
  - Food
  - Telephone bill
  - SSI check
  - Concert ticket
  - Wages
  - Shoes
  - Credit card bill
  - Trip to zoo
  - Welfare check
  - Bus fare
  - Cable TV bill
  - Doctor bill
  - Rent
  - Water bill
  - Electric bill
  - Unemployment check
  - Car insurance

Using a Bank

- Visit a cash machine/ATM and describe and demonstrate how it works.
- Visit local banks and have personnel describe services, different accounts, and budgeting.
- Acquire actual checks, checkbooks, account logs, etc. for use in teaching a checking and banking unit. Give worksheets or invoices to be logged on the checks and into the record book. Stress balancing records with bank statements.

- With the assistance of family/residential service providers, open up individual checking and savings accounts with each individual at their neighborhood bank.

What is Credit?

- Invite a credit officer from a local bank to speak about credit, loans, interest rates, payment schedules, foreclosure, and application processes.
- Discuss the pros and cons for using credit cards. Note problems that may arise if cards are used carelessly or with no restraint.
- Examine monthly credit statements from stores and/or bank cards (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, etc.). Draw attention to the total cost of the purchases, the percentage of interest being charged, and what payment would be required to pay off just the amount accrued by the interest.
- Discuss the implications of a poor credit rating.
- Contact a store to open a limited credit account for individuals to use to develop a credit rating, and to obtain practice in paying monthly bills.

Financial Planning adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1990). *Teaching the possibilities: Home living.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

This chapter represents a very brief exploration of only four of the ways that a student might come in contact with his or her community. This chapter isn't meant to be exhaustive in this regard. It's best used as model for how you might approach any of the myriad of ways that students can participate in their communities.

Questions to Ponder

- How do you define "community participation?"
- What are some strategies to increase an individual's access to the community?

11

Chapter Eleven

Recreation & Leisure

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102 Summary
102 Questions to Ponder

Introduction

Planning for recreation and leisure activities is an integral part of the overall transitional process for students with disabilities. Until recently, students with disabilities were largely excluded from participating in programs with their peers without disabilities. This often resulted from general misperceptions of the ability of students with disabilities to participate, as well as a lack of understanding of how obstacles of participation could be overcome. Fortunately, the trend is changing and students with and without disabilities are recreating together in a variety of programs and activities.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the distinctions between inclusive and accessible recreation, integrated recreation and systematic supports, and adaptive and "special" recreation.
- Begin to develop a set of strategies to assist students plan and implement their transition into adult recreational activity.

Section 1

Planning for Recreation & Leisure Options

Because recreation and leisure activities are so varied and individualized, this area of transition planning requires that students identify their own interests and preferences. Much of the paraprofessional's work is done in the settings where various activities and programs take place. This chapter will discuss the different types of leisure options and provide strategies on how to support students as they explore different recreational and leisure experiences.

The following three general types of recreation and leisure options are typically available:

Inclusive and Accessible Recreation

These types of recreation and leisure activities are available to everyone regardless of the participants' skills and abilities. They are accessible if the participants can easily enter, participate in, and exit the setting in which the activity occurs. Inclusive and accessible recreation activities allow students with disabilities the same choices and opportunities to enjoy a leisure lifestyle as their same-age peers without disabilities. This is the ultimate goal for students with disabilities when planning recreation and leisure activities.

Show Transparency 11.1

Discussion 1

Summarize with students the three types of recreation options, as well as the various settings in which people might enjoy each type of recreation. As you present this material, stress the importance of recreation in "natural" settings and of including individuals with disabilities in recreation activities where they're in contact with individuals without disabilities.

Integrated Recreation and Systematic Supports

Students with disabilities often require some support and assistance in order to participate in recreational activities. This support varies greatly depending on the needs of the individual and their activity of choice. Common supports include one-on-one assistance with the activity; adaptations of equipment, game rules and procedures; and direct facilitation of the social dynamics of an activity so participants with and without disabilities can benefit.

Adaptive or "Special" Recreation

These "special" recreation programs are typically designed for individuals with a specific disability, and consequently segregate participants from others who don't fall under that disability category. It's important for students who participate in these types of programs to also be exposed to recreational opportunities with individuals who don't have disabilities. For example, a student who participates in Special Olympics could use his or her community YMCA to practice and train for the event.

Section 2

Paraprofessional Strategies

It may be helpful to think of recreation and leisure activities in the following categories when working with students in this area of transition planning:

- Leisure alternatives
- Going out on the town
- Leisure at home
- Break time at work
- Publicly supported leisure services
- The great outdoors
- Extracurricular fun at school
- Vacation travel
- Membership organizations

The rest of this section is devoted to providing specific strategies to assist you in exploring each of these options as you help students plan and implement their recreation as adults.

Leisure Alternatives

- Complete various leisure profiles or assessments. Discuss with students any personal barriers or obstacles to leisure participation they have experienced.

- Have students talk with parents, grandparents, and other older friends about their past leisure experiences. Discuss similarities and differences to students' current leisure.
- Bring in local weekly and daily newspapers, recreation program brochures, flyers, etc., that list and advertise upcoming events and recreational activities. Have students work in small groups to identify and list those that interest them. Discuss why they chose what they did.
- Have students plan a weekend that includes preferred leisure activities. Discuss possible obstacles and ways to overcome them.
- Have students write and/or orally report about a recent leisure experience. Why was it a leisure experience?
- Have students choose one particular school or community leisure event that is upcoming to attend. Have each report their experience.
- Obtain schedules from city and neighborhood parks, recreation, community education, and similar recreational agencies. Keep it current and review upcoming events weekly. Discuss ways to get involved and participate.
- Have a representative from various leisure agencies, such as community education or nature centers, visit the classroom to discuss their services. Formulate questions and assign students to ask staff during the visit.

Going Out on the Town

- Attend field trips to community leisure settings such as malls, movie theaters, community centers, museums, and zoos to familiarize students with the environment and the requirements for accessing them. Involve students in planning the outing.
- Have students keep a log of time they spend day to day. Do this for one or two weeks. Have students identify blocks of time they may have available to go on outings.
- Have students bring information about upcoming events and other activities and community events. They will need to read newspapers, listen to radio and TV, talk with friends and family, and so forth to find this information. See how many they can list.
- Have students choose one activity or outing to analyze. Have them answer the questions listed above.
- Ask students to go on one or more outings in the next month or so. Ask them to analyze, as above, two or more possibilities before choosing which to go on. Students should be prepared to discuss their experiences with the class. Ask what they would do differently or the same, next time. Have them choose a classmate to go with.

- Create a bulletin board where students can post upcoming events they learn about. Newspaper clippings, flyers, and handwritten announcements may be posted by students. Have sections labeled *Movies, Theater, Concerts, Sports,* and the like. Have students change the board each week.
- Purchase a large city map or have students make one of the community in which they live. Map the various sites where community events typically take place shopping centers, movie theaters, civic centers, fairgrounds, athletic fields, etc. For each venue, have students determine the distance to the site from their respective homes and list the various ways they can travel to the sites. Be specific by giving bus route numbers and names of friends with whom they can carpool, etc.
- Have students prepare a budget for an outing, pick an activity to do on an outing (for example, a movie) and determine the total costs, including transportation, tickets, food during and after, etc.
- Have students, in groups of two or three, imagine how to "get ready" to go to the following leisure settings: a movie, rock concert, play, nice restaurant, county fair, friend's house, orchestra, awards banquet, wedding. Find out what they would do to get ready, how they would look, etc. Discuss their responses.

Leisure at Home

- Have students record their home activities for one to two weeks, detailing not only leisure pursuits, but time spent in such activities as eating, sleeping, grooming, and doing homework. Discuss how time is spent. Make a list and rank order home leisure pursuits of students.
- Talk with students about television. Identify and discuss what programs they most frequently watch and why. Discuss the effects of watching too much TV at the exclusion of other pursuits. Find out what students would do if TV was outlawed for two weeks. Challenge students to turn off the TV for one week (which includes not playing video games and watching videos).
- Teach students about how families from different cultures spend their free time.
- Introduce students to common board and table games. Teach students how to play various games. Discuss the effects of playing board and table games. Discuss being a good or bad sport.
- Visit stores that sell role-playing games. Speak with the proprietor about this new type of game playing — why do these games interest people, how to get started, etc. Discuss ways students can connect with role-playing clubs. Discuss ways of incorporating playing these games into hobby development (for example, collecting and painting game pieces).

- Discuss hobbies. Determine if students currently have a hobby (for example, card or record collections). Have students bring their hobbies to share. Talk about how to start a hobby. Contact and visit businesses that promote hobby development. Talk with a community education coordinator about hobby-related classes. Find out if there are local clubs that promote particular hobbies. Find out how to join.
- Sponsor an all-school hobby fair. Have students bring in and display their hobbies and tell other students how to get started in the hobby.
- Have several board and table games available for students' use during free time at school. Designate an area where interested students can set up and play, over time, a role-playing or fantasy/adventure-based board game. Start a jigsaw puzzle and let students add pieces whenever they pass by.
- Have students create a new board game. Have teams of students work together on this project. Take an age-inappropriate but familiar game and have students redo the game, keeping the same rules and methods of play, but adapting it to be more age appropriate.

Break Time at Work

- Have students imagine that going to school is their job and the classrooms are their work stations. Have them determine when they get breaks, where they spend breaks, and what they typically do during a break. Discuss how this is similar or different from typical work placements.
- Discuss breaks with the school's vocational work experience coordinator and learn what break options exist within companies that currently employ students. Have these work coordinators visit the class to talk to students about break options and their importance in various work settings (you may need to arrange initial meetings with employers to determine these options).
- Role play taking a break. Students can choose what to do for 15 minutes.
- Discuss any preplanning one would need to do to prepare for an anticipated break the next day at work. For example, ask students what they would need to do at home — pack a snack with lunch, include a deck of cards, bring coins for the vending machine, pack a personal stereo, or include a book or magazine.
- Ask students to interview one or both parents and/or a neighbor about breaks they take at work. Find out what they do and why. Share this information with the class.

- Invite personnel directors, business executives, and other personnel from various job sites throughout the community to share the relationship of leisure to work and the importance of taking breaks.

Publicly Supported Leisure Services

- Have representatives from the local parks and recreation and community education departments come to the classroom to talk with students. Have them bring current program schedules to pass out. Discuss how to use a recreation center. Practice registering for an enrichment class. Find out what additional supports, if any, are available to youth with disabilities.
- Walk or take a bus to the nearest recreation center for a guided tour. Make sure to spend time there so students can enjoy the offerings of the park and center.
- Arrange with a recreation center to teach students how to access and use the park and center. Class could meet there once a week, over a period of time (three to five weeks) so that students acquire the necessary skills to use the park and programs.
- Plan with the community education coordinator to arrange for an after-school service club that interested students can join and lead. The club could be sponsored by community education with a volunteer adult advisor recruited from other community education programs. Club members would also learn about other enrichment classes being offered and how to access them.
- Organize self-advocacy groups to go to parks and recreation centers and community education departments to enhance awareness of staff about ways to include youth with disabilities in programs and services.
- Attend a neighborhood advisory council or recreation association meeting to hear how parks and recreation and community education services are talked about by various community members and decision makers.
- Have students go to their neighborhood recreation center and find out the following information: name of director, phone number of center, current program schedule (bring back flyers and schedules), facility layout, hours of center, any special rules, characteristics of typical park users, etc. Hand in reports to teacher and photocopy. Have students make these into a resource guide for future reference.

The Great Outdoors

- Take a nature hike around your school, its playing fields, and neighboring streets. In teams of two to four students, observe and record plant and animal life. Talk about your findings in class. How did students feel about their observations?

- Ask students to visit one or more of these outdoor environments: backyard, neighborhood park, regional and/or state park. Have students report back on the characteristics of these environments which did or didn't make their visit interesting and worthwhile.
- Have students write to a national park office to request informational brochures about the parks. Plot the locations on a map of the United States. Determine the unique characteristics of these parks that might help to draw visitors. Discuss the implications of the location of the parks in relation to urban areas which may be nearby.
- Have students record outdoor activities they engage in over a two-week period. Have students write about an experience they particularly enjoyed and one they didn't especially like.
- In winter, have an ice-sculpture exhibition in the school yard. Students can work in teams of two to three people. Sponsor a winter festival for other students in the school.
- Create a mural depicting different outdoor activities which students in your class and throughout the school may or already enjoy doing. Make these seasonal murals and place them in locations for all to see.
- Help students rent snowshoes or cross-country skis and hike or ski in the school yard.
- Take students on a field trip to a nature center. Hike with an interpretive naturalist. Do a nature-related activity upon return to the center (for example, paper making, molds of animal prints).
- In teams of two, have students collect litter around the school yard and immediate neighborhood. Weigh garbage bags and give a prize to the team that collects the most. Talk about ways humankind can eliminate pollution.
- Take students to a store that sells outdoor recreation clothing and equipment. Teach them about the best way to dress for a hike, cross-country skiing, canoe trip, or another outdoor pursuit. Have students list the equipment needed.
- Ask students to identify a favorite outdoor space around or near their homes and describe it to their classmates. What do they enjoy doing in this space?

Extracurricular Fun at School

- Infuse leisure-related activities in other curricula areas so that learning is fun for students. For example, teach math skills while playing Monopoly or bowling; teach history through role-playing board games; teach grooming and hygiene at the end of a workout at the YMCA; teach business by analyzing sports trading cards; and teach creative thinking through video games.

- Invite faculty advisors and club officers to talk with students about extracurricular activities available to them.
- Arrange for students to attend various extracurricular activities to observe and report back to class.
- Assist interested students in becoming active on Community Transition Interagency Committees, leisure subcommittees, community education advisory committees, etc.
- Help students problem solve any barriers that might be facing them.
- Have students look through yearbooks, school newspapers, and posters to find out about their school's extracurricular activities. Have them choose one or two activities in which to participate.
- After determining five questions to ask about the activity, have students interview current members.

Vacation Travel

- Take students on a field trip to a travel agent. Have them talk with an agent about what to do to take a vacation. Collect travel brochures and discuss in class.
- Have students visit an airport, bus station, and train terminal. Talk with ticketing agents about procedures for making reservations, buying tickets, luggage allowances, and when to arrive at the terminals.
- Have students take a hypothetical trip. Have small groups of students (two or three each) determine a vacation spot. Students must plan the trip from start to finish – including the cost of tickets for all travel (land, water, air, parking, car rentals, etc.); travel restrictions, if any; clothing and luggage needs; who to contact before leaving (family, friends, utilities, paper, etc.); lodging; attractions; and so forth.
- Bring in clothing for a long weekend trip. Have students pack the suitcase. Discuss items that are missing or should not be included.
- Talk about travel spots. Have students identify where they have gone or would like to go. Have students look at brochures and newspaper ads for popular vacation spots. Locate them on the maps. Discuss transportation alternatives to these places.
- Help students practice writing postcards about a hypothetical trip. Have them mail one to themselves.
- Have guest speakers come in to show slides and videotapes of vacations they offer or of places they have been.

- Have students list any special accommodations they may need to go on a vacation and trip, such as wheelchair access, medications, other adaptive equipment, etc.

Sharing the Experiences: Membership Organizations

- As a class, take field trips to a nearby membership organization to learn about its focus, membership requirements, member benefits, and responsibilities. Have a staff member conduct a tour. If one-time guest passes are available for students, ask for and distribute these.
- Collect and compile a comprehensive resource file on membership organizations in your community. Students may assist by contacting and/or stopping into membership organizations to get literature.
- Using the guest passes obtained above, or by special permission of the member organization, plan an outing to use the facilities of the organization. Afterwards, discuss the experience with students, getting their personal feedback.
- Weigh and discuss the similarities and differences between membership in organizations as a form of leisure versus participation in community education and other publicly supported leisure alternatives.
- Have students find a friend, neighbor, or acquaintance who is currently a member of an organization and interview them to determine why they joined.
- Discuss how membership in an organization may or may not enhance the social integration and community participation of students who have disabilities.
- Discuss specific barriers students may have with joining a membership organization. Explore ways to overcome these barriers.

Volunteering: Enjoying Oneself While Helping Others

- Contact a representative from your local Voluntary Action Center to visit your classroom to discuss volunteering and volunteer opportunities.
- Have students make and post a comprehensive list of volunteer activities they could realistically do in these different areas: home, neighborhood, school, church, parks, social service agencies, other.
- Assign students to do a specific volunteer activity for a school semester. Have them maintain a log and/or report back to the classroom on their experiences (good, bad, etc.).
- Have students compose an article for the school newspaper about the importance of volunteering.

- Talk with work site coordinators and/or employers about how, if at all, the volunteer activities of employees benefits the workplace.
- Talk with school administrators about using a school hallway bulletin board to post volunteer opportunities available for students. Have students change the bulletin periodically to update notices.
- Sponsor a Volunteer Expo and invite agencies to have informational booths to share volunteer possibilities with students, family, and community members who visit.
- Volunteer as a class to organize and run a water station at a local walk-a-thon.
- Set up and dismantle a community volunteer fair.

Summary

Recreation and leisure may be the most enjoyable of all transition activities. What better task can you imagine than to provide instruction and role modeling in how to have fun? We hope you're able to gain some vicarious pleasure as you help students plan their leisure time and that you have some opportunities to "play" with students as well.

Questions to Ponder

- The role of the paraprofessional may not be perfectly clear when it comes to helping students plan and implement recreational activities. Is it your responsibility to keep your students at "arm's length?" Is it part of your job to "have fun" with students? Are you comfortable simply enjoying yourself in the presence of your students?

Activity 1

This activity might be called *Your Leisure Geography* or *Close to Home or Far Away, There are Many Wonderful Places to Play.* Write the following headings on the board or overhead:

- Close to home (within walking or wheeling distance)
- Short car or bus ride (5–15 minutes maximum)
- Long car or bus ride (over 15 minutes)
- Great distance away (over 100 miles)

Have students break into small groups and generate at least four places in each category where people go to enjoy their leisure time. Reconvene the class and write the ideas that they generated on the board. If possible, comment on the diversity of content at which each group arrived. This is a small indication of the individual nature of what people consider recreative.

Appendices

103 **Appendix A** **The Individualized Education Plan**
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Appendix A

The Individualized Education Plan

Page 1 of

IEP Meeting Date: ____________
IEP Written Date: ____________
Last Assessment Summary Report Date: ____________
Progress Report Frequency: ____________

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

A. STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's Name	Sex M F	Grade	Birthdate	ID Number
Street Address City, State, Zip			Native Language/Primary Communication Mode	
School of Enrollment		School Telephone ( )	Providing District Number	
Student's Permanent Resident Address (if different)			Resident District Number	

B. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent(s)' Name(s)	Home Telephone ( )	Daytime Telephone ( )	School District Number
Parent's Address (if different)	Native Language/Primary Communication Mode		
Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Name(s)	☐ Guardian(s)	☐ Surrogate Parent(s)	
Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Address (if different)	Home Telephone ( )	Daytime Telephone ( )	

C. IEP INFORMATION

IEP Manager Name & Title	Telephone Number ( )	Type of IEP: ☐ Initial ☐ Annual ☐ Interim	
Primary Disability	State Code	Secondary Disability(ies)	State Code(s)

D. IEP TEAM MEETING

Title	Names of All Team Members	Indicate Attendance
Parent		☐ Yes ☐ No
Parent		☐ Yes ☐ No
Student		☐ Yes ☐ No
School District Representative		☐ Yes ☐ No
Special Education Teacher		☐ Yes ☐ No
General Education Teacher (K-12 Only)		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No

A copy is sent to the student's resident district when the student is not a resident of the providing district.

Copies: Due Process File IEP Manager
Parent

This form is available in several languages, Braille, or other format. Contact the director of special education.

Page of

Student's Name: ______________________

E.1	**PROGRAM PLANNING**
	Following initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.

How the student's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the K-12 **general curriculum**:
(for students using Braille, includes how Braille will be implemented through integration with other classroom activities)
For **preschool** children or students age **18 – 22**, how the disability affects participation in **appropriate activities**:

Summary of Strengths and Concerns (Optional)

Student's **strengths:**

Educational concerns of parent(s) and student:

For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, how the student's **interests** and **preferences** were **considered** and **included** if the student did not attend this IEP meeting:

Page of Student's Name: ______________________________

E.2

PROGRAM PLANNING

Performance Areas

- ☐ Intellectual/Cognitive Functioning
- ☐ Academic Performance
- ☐ Functional Skills
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Motor Skills
- ☐ Emotional, Social, and Behavioral Development
- ☐ Sensory
- ☐ Health/Physical

For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, use section E.3 (Transition Program Planning).

Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.

Present Level(s) of Educational Performance:

Student-based Needs:

Annual Goal:
___ of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Annual Goal:
___ of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Page of Student's Name: ______________________

E.3	**TRANSITION PROGRAM PLANNING**

Transition Areas
(All areas must be addressed.)

☐ Employment
☐ Post-Secondary Education & Training
☐ Community Participation
☐ Recreation/Leisure
☐ Home Living/Daily Living

Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.

Future Outcome/Goal:

Present Levels of Performance:

Student-based Needs: *(for instruction, experiences, and related services)* ***If no need, provide rationale.***

Activities Planned to Meet Future Outcome/Goal: *(school courses/standards; home, community, and work experiences; and/or related services)* ***Identify who is accountable for each activity.***

Annual Goal:
___of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Annual Goal:
___of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Page of Student's Name: ________________________________

E.4 PROFILES OF LEARNING

See documentation attached to this IEP.

F. ADAPTATIONS IN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

F.1 **Adaptations** and the duration of these adaptations, including supplemental aids and services to be used in general and special education that will be made available **to the student** (e.g., grading, staff, transportation, facilities, materials, equipment, assistive technology devices and services, curriculum, methods, coordination of support services, vocational services and equipment, limited English proficiency services, school discipline policy, paraprofessional services, and other services):

F.2 Program modifications or supports for **school personnel** that will be provided to meet the student's identified needs:

G. RIGHTS AT AGE OF MAJORITY

*Address **only** in IEPs for students who will reach age 17 during the tenure of this IEP.*

☐ The student, upon reaching age 17, has been informed of the rights which will transfer to him/her upon reaching the age of majority (18), unless legal guardian or conservator has been appointed.

Student's Signature: ________________________________ Date: ______________

H.1 MINNESOTA STATEWIDE TESTING

Address only in IEPs developed for grades 3, 5, 8, 10+. Grade level to be covered: ________

(Check the appropriate box.)

A. ☐ If applicable, the team plans for the following **accommodations** for test administration: (Test **modifications** are not allowed for Statewide Testing.)

B. ☐ Student is **exempt**. The alternate assessment will be used.

1. Rationale for exemption:

H.2 BASIC STANDARDS TESTING

Address only in the IEP for grade 8 or above.

Prior to Basic Standards Testing, the team determined the following standards for this student:

Accommodations if appropriate or if needed:

Modifications if appropriate or if needed:

If **exempt**, the reason:

If **exempt**, the alternate assessment(s) to be used:

Check the appropriate box to indicate the level the student will attempt for testing:

	State	Individual *	Exempt **	Passed
Reading:				
Math:				
Writing:				

* If the modification is to alter the district's passing level, **test score expected** to be achieved is entered.
** If the student is **exempt,** the goals on the IEP will be the criteria for awarding the diploma.

Page of Student's Name: ______________________

I. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES TO MEET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Instruction or Service Provided	Location		Anticipated Frequency	Total Minutes Per Week		Service	
	General Education	Special Education		Indirect	Direct	Start Date	Anticipated Duration

J. EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

I.3 Are **extended school year services** required for this student? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, reasons are described here or attached.

K. INTERAGENCY SERVICES

Agency Name	Interagency/Organization Linkages *(Identify services, funding, responsibilities, etc.)*

L. ALTERED SCHOOL DAY

Has this student's day been altered? ☐ Yes ☐ No **If yes**, reasons are described here or attached.

Page of Student's Name: ______________________________

M. PLACEMENT DETERMINATION: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

M.1 Activities With Students Without Disabilities

Check the appropriate box(es).

If in K-12, activities in which the student will be participating with students who do not have disabilities:

☐ **All** the following activities

☐ Core Subject Areas : ______________________________

- ☐ Art
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Assemblies
- ☐ Lunch
- ☐ School to Work
- ☐ Recess
- ☐ Field Trips

☐ Extracurricular Activities: ______________________________

☐ Other: ______________________________

M.2 LRE Justification

Other options considered and why rejected, and **why** this student's disability requires service(s) in this setting:

M.3 Federal Child Count Setting

Check the appropriate box:

K – 12 +		Setting		ECSE Age 3 to Kindergarten Entrance
General Education (In special education less than 21%)	→	☐ I.	←	Early Childhood Setting or Homebased
Resource Room (21 to 60%)	→	☐ II.	←	Parttime EC Setting or Home and ECSE or Reverse Mainstreaming or Itinerant Services
Separate Class (more than 60%)	→	☐ III.	←	ECSE Classroom
Public Separate Day School	→	☐ IV.	←	Public Separate Day School
Private Separate Day School	→	☐ V.	←	Private Separate Day School
Public Residential	→	☐ VI.	←	Public Residential
Private Residential	→	☐ VII.	←	Private Residential
Homebased/Homebound/Hospital	→	☐ VIII.	←	Homebound/Hospital

Note: Provide Notice of Proposed Special Education Services

Appendix B

Information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para

State Laws Regarding Paraprofessionals

State of Minnesota, Omnibus Education Bill of 1998
Article 2, Section 9

(b) For paraprofessionals employed to work in programs for students with disabilities, the school board in each district shall ensure that:

1. before or immediately upon employment, each paraprofessional develops sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability, among other things, to begin meeting the needs of the students which whom the paraprofessional works;
2. annual training opportunities are available to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities; and
3. a districtwide process obligates each paraprofessional to work under the ongoing direction of a licensed teacher and, where appropriate and possible, the supervision of a school nurse.

Guiding Principles for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

These principles were used to guide the development of competencies for Minnesota paraprofessionals during the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998:

- Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student-related activities.
- The entire instructional team participates within clearly-defined roles in a dynamic, changing environment to provide an appropriate educational program for students.

- To ensure quality education and safety for students and staff, paraprofessionals are provided with a district orientation and training prior to assuming those responsibilities.
- Teachers and others responsible for the work of paraprofessionals have the skills necessary to work effectively with paraprofessionals.
- By recognizing a paraprofessional's training, responsibilities, experience, and skill levels, they are placed in positions for which they are qualified and which effectively and efficiently use their skills to enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.
- Administrators exercise leadership by recognizing paraprofessionals as educational partners.

Core Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

The following core competencies are expected of all paraprofessionals working in Minnesota schools. These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed above. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

Core Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 A sensitivity to the beliefs, traditions and values across cultures and the effect of the relationships among children, families, and schooling.		X	
K2 Awareness of the human and legal rights and responsibilities of parents and children/youth as they relate to individual learning needs.			X
K3 Understanding of the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel.		X	
K4 Understanding of the purposes and goals of education for all individuals.			X
K5 Awareness of responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures.		X	
S1 Carry out responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures.			X
Additions:			

2. Characteristics of Learners	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Awareness of the similarities and differences among the cognitive, communicative, physical, social, and emotional needs of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.			X
K2 Awareness of the effects that exceptional conditions have on an individual's life and family in the home, school, and community.			X
K3 Awareness of characteristics and effects of the cultural, linguistic, and environmental background of the child and family.			X
K4 Understanding of the effect of medications commonly prescribed for individuals with learning needs.		X	
K5 Awareness of the educational implications of the above factors.			X
Additions:			
3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation			
K1 Awareness of district's ability to provide for and use the tools of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation.		X	
S1 With direction from a professional, make and document observations appropriate to the individual with learning needs.			X
S2 Provide objective documentation of observations to appropriate professionals.			X
Additions:			
4. Instructional Content and Practice			
K1 Awareness of learning styles of individuals.		X	
K2 Awareness of the demands and expectations of various learning environments.			X
K3 Awareness of a variety of instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and materials.			X
S1 Establish and maintain rapport with learners.	X		
S2 Use developmentally and age-appropriate strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies, as directed, to accomplish instructional objectives.			X
S3 Under the direction of a professional, assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the learner.			X

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
S4 Follow written plans, seeking clarification as needed.			X
Additions:			
5. Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment			
K1 Awareness of the environmental factors that affect teaching and learning, including health and safety issues.		X	
K2 Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning.			X
K3 Understanding of strategies and techniques for facilitating the integration of individuals with learning needs in various settings.		X	
K4 Awareness by the paraprofessional of how they impact the overall learning environment for students and staff.		X	
S1 Assist in maintaining a safe, healthy, learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures.		X	
S2 As directed, prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning.			X
S3 Use strategies that promote the learner's independence.			X
Additions:			
6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills			
K1 Understanding of applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals.		X	
K2 Understanding of ethical considerations inherent in the management of behaviors.		X	
K3 Awareness of the factors that influence the behavior of individuals with learning needs.		X	
K4 Awareness of the social skills needed for current and future environments.		X	
K5 Awareness of effective instructional practices that enhance the development of social skills.		X	
K6 Awareness of the range and implications of management approaches/strategies that influence the behavior of individual's with learning needs.		X	

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K7 Understanding of the district-building behavior management plans for students.		X	
S1 Demonstrate effective strategies for the management of behaviors.			X
S2 Assist in modifying the learning environment to manage behavior.			X
S3 Collect and provide objective, accurate information to professionals, as appropriate.			X
S4 Use appropriate strategies and techniques in a variety of settings to assist in the development of social skills.			X
Additions:			
7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships			
K1 Awareness of typical concerns of parents of individuals with learning needs.		X	
K2 Awareness of the roles of individuals with learning needs, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program.		X	
S1 Use ethical practices for confidential communication about learners with learning needs.		X	
S2 Under the direction of a professional, use constructive strategies in working with individuals with learning needs, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments.			X
S3 Follow the instructions of the professional.		X	
S4 Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and other school and community personnel.			X
S5 Participate as requested in conferences with families or primary caregivers as members of the educational team.			X
S6 Use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, roles, and instructional activities.			X
S7 Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritage, lifestyles, and value systems among children, youth, and families.			X
S8 Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to use effective problem solving, engage in flexible thinking, employ appropriate conflict management techniques, and analyze one's own personal strengths and preferences.			X

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
Additions:			
8. Professionalism and Ethical Practices			
K1 Recognition of the paraprofessional as a positive role model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.		X	
S1 Demonstrate commitment to assisting learners in achieving their highest potential.	X		
S2 Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions among roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, professionals, and other support personnel.		X	
S3 Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's responsibilities as a paraprofessional.		X	
S4 Demonstrate respect for culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of students.	X		
S5 Demonstrate a willingness to participate in ongoing staff development, self-evaluation, and apply constructive feedback.	X		
S6 Demonstrate proficiency in academic skills including oral and written communication.	X		
S7 Practice within the context of written standards and policies of the school or agency where they are employed.		X	
Additions:			

Core competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998, and are based on the competencies found in: Council on Exceptional Children (1998). *What every special educator must know, 3rd ed.* Minneapolis, MN: Author. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para.*

Specialized Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

In addition to the core competencies, the following specialized competencies are expected of paraprofessionals working in specific positions (early childhood, transition to work, behavior management, academic program assistants, and physical/other health impairments). These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed on page 113. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

Early Childhood
Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
1. Early Childhood, Home Visitor Programs			
K1 Understanding their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children.			X
K2 Understanding of their role in listening and communicating with parents to gather information which the service delivery team can build on to meet the needs of the child and family.	X		
K3 Awareness of health care providers, social services and other resources available in the community to assist parents and their child.		X	
K4 Understanding their role in enhancing parent interactions with their child by demonstrating effective techniques/materials to stimulate cognitive, physical, social and language development.		X	
Additions:			
2. Early Childhood,Center-Based Programs			
K1 Awareness of basic developmental stages, ages 0-5.		X	
K2 Understanding of their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing and implementing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children.			X
S1 Ability to use developmentally appropriate instructional interventions for curriculum activities in the areas of cognitive, motor, self-help, social/play, and language development for infants and young children ages 0-5.			X
S2 Ability to gather information about the performance of children in all areas of development and to share it with professional colleagues.		X	
S3 Demonstrate competence in preparing and using developmentally appropriate materials, under the direction of a professional.		X	
S4 Demonstrate an understanding of the paraprofessional's role in communicating and working effectively with parents, other primary caregivers, and team members.			X
Additions:			

Transition to Work and Adult Life Specialized Competencies

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Transition to Work and Adult Life	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Understanding of the need for transition-related services.		X	
K2 Awareness of how to access information on community resources available to individuals with disabilities of transition age and their families.		X	
K3 Understanding of the importance of interagency collaboration.		X	
K4 Knowledge of the ethical and legal standards of conduct in relationships with students, parents, adult service providers, employers, and coworkers.		X	
S1 Understanding of transition-related assessment strategies and ability to provide team with information useful to the development of transition-related goals and objectives.			X
S2 Ability to facilitate and support student involvement in decision making.		X	
S3 Ability to identify and develop accommodations and natural supports in the work setting.		X	
S4 Knowledge of and ability to provide instruction and support in leisure skills, social skills, self-determination skills, community mobility skills, and independent living skills.			X
S5 Ability to provide instruction and support in work-related behaviors, job-seeking skills, and job-specific skills in school or at a community work site.			X
Additions:			

Behavior Management
Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Behavior Management	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Understanding of personality and social/ emotional development.		X	
K2 Understanding of behavioral/emotional challenges and the interaction with other disabilities.		X	
K3 Understanding of the need for utilizing formal and informal assessment strategies in obtaining information necessary for educational and behavioral programming for individual students.		X	
K4 Understanding of the rationale, components, operation and evaluation of the program models in which they are working.		X	
S1 Ability to document change in learner behavior in both academic and social areas.		X	
S2 Ability to observe and record pupil behavior utilizing different social rating systems.		X	
S3 Demonstrate the use of different methods to change and maintain behavior.		X	
S4 Ability to implement remedial techniques in academic skill areas with learners.		X	
S5 Ability to use materials designed for skill development in the social areas.			X
S6 Ability to collaborate effectively with team members.			X
Additions:			

Academic Program Assistants
Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
1. Academic Program Assistants			
K1 Knowledge of the paraprofessional's role and function in the specific academic setting.		X	
K2 Awareness of Minnesota Graduation Standards, including state testing and high standards as outlined in student IEPs.		X	
K3 Awareness of factors which influence cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.		X	
K4 Knowledge of educational terminology related to specific program or age level.		X	
S1 Ability to instruct students in academic subjects using lesson plans and instructional strategies developed by teachers and other professional staff.			X
S2 Ability to gather and record data about the performance and behavior of individual students.		X	
S3 Ability to confer with special and general education practitioners about individual student schedules, instructional goals, progress, and performance.		X	
S4 Ability to use developmental and age-appropriate instructional methods and reinforcement techniques.			X
S5 Ability to effectively use available instructional resources including technology, as directed by the professional.		X	
S6 Understanding of various learning styles and the ability to implement corresponding teaching methods.			X
S7 Demonstrate the ability to implement techniques to include students in general education as outlined in IEPs.			X
Additions:			

Physical and Other Health Impairments Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Physical and Other Health Impairments	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Understanding of specific student environments and learning modification/ accommodation strategies.		X	
K2 Understanding of medical conditions and emergency procedures for specific students, including care for seizures, latex allergies, catheterizations, tracheotomies, gastrostomies, ventilators, etc.		X	
K3 Understanding of proper storage, documentation, administration, and side effects of specific student medications. (NOTE: specific training is required to administer medication.)		X	
K4 Awareness of specific student transportation issues and emergency evacuation procedures.		X	
K5 Awareness of legal and liability issues specific to vulnerable and medically fragile students.		X	
S1 Demonstrate competence in the use of proper body mechanics for self and specific student when transferring, lifting and positioning that student.		X	
S2 Demonstrate competence in implementation, safety, and maintenance of all necessary adaptive, assistive, and instructional technology and equipment.			X
S3 Certification in age appropriate CPR (infant/ child, adult) and Basic First Aid, and the ability to respond appropriately during an emergency situation.			X
S4 Ability to properly assist students with activities of daily living, including toileting, feeding, dressing, and mobility.			X
S5 Ability to implement strategies that encourage student independence and participation in all areas of development and classroom learning.			X
Additions:			

Specialized competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para*

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Appendix C
Disability-Related Legislation

There are several pieces of state and federal legislation that define and support transition, which are described below.

Federal Definition of Transition Services

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act has a new name: IDEA, short for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476). This act adds a new definition of transition services, adds transition services to students' IEPs, and makes changes in transition programs authorized under Part C of the law. The following is the new definition of transition services:

> Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including:
>
> - Post secondary education.
> - Vocational training.
> - Integrated employment (including supported employment).
> - Continuing and adult education.
> - Adult services.
> - Independent living.
> - Community participation.
>
> The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and may include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The law also specifically refers to transition services in the overall definition of an "individualized education plan," or IEP. IEPs must now include "a statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than age sixteen and annually thereafter (and when determined appropriate for the individual, beginning at age fourteen or younger), including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting."

In addition, the law attends to the transition needs of students who use assistive technology. Under IDEA, transition programs that get federal funding may "develop and disseminate exemplary programs and practices that meet the unique needs of students who utilize assistive technology devices and services as such students make the transition to post-secondary education, vocational transition, competitive employment, and continuing education or adult services."

Regulations for IDEA (Public Law 101-476)

The following transition-related IDEA regulations were published in the Federal Register on September 29, 1992, to indicate how IDEA will be interpreted:

> **Transition Service Participants:** If a purpose of the meeting is the consideration of transition services for a student, the public agency shall invite the student and a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. If the student does not attend, the public agency shall take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered; and if an agency invited to send a representative to a meeting does not do so, the public agency shall take other steps to obtain the participation of the other agency in the planning of any transition services. (300.344)
>
> **Parent Participation:** If a purpose of the meeting is the consideration of transition services for a student, the notice (to parents) must also indicate this purpose. Indicate that the agency will invite the student and note any other agency that will be invited to send a representative. (300.345)
>
> **Content of Individualized Education Program:** The IEP for each student, beginning no later than age sixteen (and at a younger age, if deemed appropriate), must include a statement of the needed transition services including, if appropriate, a statement of each public agency's responsibilities or linkages, or both, before the student leaves the school setting. If the IEP team determines that services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified, the IEP must include a statement to that effect and the basis upon which the determination was made. (300.346)
>
> **Agency Responsibilities for Transition Services:** If a participating agency fails to provide agreed-upon transition services contained in the IEP of a student with a disability, the public agency responsible for the student's education shall, as soon as possible, initiate a meeting to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives and, if necessary, revise the student's IEP. Nothing in this part relieves any participating agency, including a State vocational rehabilitation agency, of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition services that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency. (300.347)

Interagency committee: The local committee shall:

A Meet at least quarterly to fulfill the duties prescribed in statute; *and*

B Report annually when directed to the Department of Education summarizing progress and recommendations.

Operating procedures fulfilling the requirements in each statute must be included in the district's total special education system plan. (Chapter 3525.0650)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17)

In 1997, Congress amended the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 105-17). Notwithstanding the changes, the definition of transition services has remained the same continuing the tradition begun in 1990 with the passage of P.L. 101-476 of preparing individuals with disabilities for life after high school. The current legislation promotes effective transition programming by:

- Providing a definition of " transition services."
- Listing the set of coordinated activities that comprise transition services, and detailing the basis for determining which activities are appropriate for an individual student.
- Specifying the process by which a statement of needed transition services is included in the student's IEP.
- Describing the responsibilities of the educational agency to monitor the provisions of IDEA.

The changes in the law include:

- Transition services for youth with disabilities should begin at age 14, be updated annually and be focused on the child's course of study. The law states, "Beginning at age 14, and updated annually, a statement of the transition service needs of the child under the applicable components of the child's IEP that focuses on the child's courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program) [P.L. 105-17, Section 614 (d) (1) (A) (vii)]".
- By age 16 (or younger if determined by the IEP team) the transition part of the IEP should contain a statement of interagency responsibilities and any other needed linkages [P.L. 105-17, Section 614 (d) (1) (A) (vii) (II)].
- At least one year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, "a statement that the child has been informed of his or her rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under section 615 (m) . . ." [P.L.105-17, Section 614(d)(1)(A)(vii)(III)].

- States may transfer rights to children with disabilities reaching the age of majority under State law, who have not been determined to be incompetent, so long as both the student and the parent are notified[Section 615 (m)].

Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 revise and extend the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 until the year 2003. Some of the salient features of the legislation include:

- Definition of Transition Services is identical to the one in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Development of linkages between State vocational rehabilitation programs and workforce investment activities carried out under the Workforce Investment Partnership Act of 1998.
- The responsibility of the Secretary of Education to coordinate all activities related to individuals with disabilities within and across programs administered by the Federal Government.
- Setting aside funds for outreach to minorities.
- Revision of requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services plans, individual eligibility, individualized rehabilitation employment plans, vocational rehabilitation services, group services evaluation standards and performance indicators, and monitoring and review.
- Elimination of discretionary technical assistance to State rehabilitation agencies and community rehabilitation programs, grants and contracts for vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, loan guarantees for community rehabilitation programs and comprehensive rehabilitation centers.
- Funds for special demonstration programs, migrant and seasonal farm workers programs and recreational programs.
- Elimination of discretionary grants for reader services for blind individuals and interpreter services for deaf individuals.
- Award of competitive, one-time, time-limited grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to establish and operate projects in telecommuting for individuals with disabilities and self-employment for individuals with disabilities.
- Funds for services to Individuals with Significant Disabilities, including Independent Living Services and Centers for Independent Living.

Other Legislation Supporting Transition

In addition to IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, two additional laws supporting transition are also in place: Public Law 101-392, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, and PL 100-336, the Americans with Disabilities Act. Each of these laws gives additional strength and direction regarding the design of transition programs and support services.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-332)

Signed into law on October 31, 1998, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 presents a new vision of vocational and technical education for the 21st century. The main goal of the legislation is to improve student achievement and prepare students for postsecondary education and careers. Some of the highlights of the legislation include:

- Reform and innovation in vocational and technical education to ensure that students gain the skills and knowledge necessary to meet academic standards and industry-recognized skill standards, and to prepare for postsecondary education and high-skill, high-wage careers.
- Alignment of vocational and technical education with State and local efforts to reform secondary schools and improve postsecondary education.
- Promotes the development of integrated, "one-stop" education and workforce development systems at the State and local level.
- Focuses on high-quality programs that integrate academic and vocational education, address the needs of individuals who are members of special populations, involves parents and employers, provide strong linkages between secondary and postsecondary education develop, improve and expand the use of technology and provide professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators.
- Gives States, school districts, and postsecondary institutions greater flexibility to design services and activities that meet the needs of their students and communities.
- Reauthorizes Tech-Prep
- Promotes using work-based learning and new technologies in tech-prep programs and partnering with business, labor organizations, and institutions of higher education.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA)

The STWOA was passed in 1994 as a joint effort of the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor. It has helped to build state and local school to work systems to prepare all students for high-skill, high-wage jobs or further education and training. The Act is designed to assist "...both male and female youth from a broad range of backgrounds and circumstances, including disadvantaged youth, youth with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, youth with disabilities, youth with limited English proficiency, migrant children, school dropouts, and academically talented youth [P.L. 103-239, Section 4 (2)]. STWOA requires that school to work systems have three elements:

- School-based learning, which includes career exploration and counseling, instruction in a career major, and a program of study based on high academic and occupational skill standards.
- Work-based learning, which includes structured job training or work experiences (including paid work experience), workplace mentoring, and instruction in industry-specific skills.
- Connecting activities, which help to bring schools, youth, families, and employers together to connect both the worlds of school and work.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The purpose of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) is to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate to end discrimination against persons with disabilities. The ADA guarantees equal access for individuals with disabilities in the following areas:

- **Employment:** No employer shall discriminate against any qualified person with a disability in regard to all terms, conditions or privileges of employment. Employers with 25 or more workers must comply by July 26, 1992. Employers with 15 or more workers must comply by July 26, 1994.
- **Public accommodations:** No person shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, such as restaurants, hotels, doctor offices, grocery stores, museums, retail stores.
- **State and local government services:** No qualified person with a disability may be discriminated against by a department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a state or local government.
- **Transportation:** Services owned by private companies must make new over-the-road buses accessible. Transportation "phase-ins" for accessibility range from 30 days to three years.
- **Telecommunications:** Telephone services offered to the general public must include interstate and intrastate telecommunication relay services, allowing customers with disabilities who use non-voice terminal devices to have equal service to those who use voice telephone services. Telecommunications relay services became effective July 26, 1994.

Appendix D

The Personal Futures Planning Process

How to Begin

- The facilitator and co-facilitator introduce themselves and share information about their general background and experiences with the group.
- Facilitators ask family members and participants to introduce themselves and share any pertinent information they wish.
- Facilitators provide participants with a brief introduction to the personal futures planning process.

Instructions for Facilitators

- Facilitators first explain to participants that the personal futures planning process is like a treasure hunt. The goal is to collect information about the focus person in the form of memories, thoughts, and ideas.
- The group is then informed that they will, over the course of the meeting, discuss six topic areas in the focus person's life. These areas are:
  1. Background
  2. Relationships
  3. Places
  4. Choices
  5. Preferences
  6. Focus on the future for self-determination
- Specific questions which can prompt discussion in these areas are included on the following pages.
- When all of the topic areas have been covered in the personal futures discussion, the facilitators distribute and explain to family members a "self-determination questionnaire". This questionnaire is to be filled out by family members over the course of the next week, so that it can be used at the next family education and support session.

1 · Background

In this first step of the personal futures planning session, the family discusses the individual's history. The purpose of this session is to document any event or memory which the family feels is important for understanding the individual's background. Having specific dates or names are not nearly as important in piecing together a description of the person's past as are memories, events, and feelings that the family wishes to share. While one facilitator is assisting in the discussion, the other facilitator can be documenting the information on the "Background Map". The information can be depicted with pictures, symbols, arrows, words, and colors – any way that communicates the information clearly for the family.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on Background

1 Where was the focus person born?
2 How did the focus person behave as a baby/child?
3 What were some major or memorable events that occurred in the focus person's past?
4 What did the focus person enjoy doing for fun or on vacations as a child?
5 What general memories do you have of the focus person's childhood?
6 What schools did the focus person attend?
7 What activities or subjects did the focus person enjoy in school?

2 · Relationships (Family, Friends, Service Providers)

In this second step of the personal futures planning session, the family discusses the focus persons relationships. Using a "Relationship Map", a facilitator will document the names of family members, friends, and service providers. Generally, the names of people the focus person feels closest to or with whom he or she spends the most time should be written toward the center of the circle. The purpose of this section is to create a relationship or social network map, which can help the family better understand the focus persons social relationships.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on Relationships

1 Who are the people with whom the focus person spends the most time? (These people should be placed closest to the focus person in the center of the Relationship Circle.)
2 How much time does the focus person spend with each person?
3 Who are the people the focus person feels closest to?
4 Who are the people with whom the focus person has contact on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis? (The more time spent with the focus person, the closer to the center of the Relationship Circle they are placed.)
5 Are these persons friends, family, or service providers? (They should be placed in the appropriate section of the Relation-

ship Circle.)

6 Are any animals or pets involved in the focus person's IHE?

3 · Places

In this third step of the personal futures planning session the family discusses where the focus person goes in the community. Included in this discussion are how often the focus person goes out into the community, how they get there and with whom. The facilitator can use symbols, names and arrows to create a map of places the focus person goes into the community.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information about Places the Focus Person Frequents

1 What community and neighborhood environments are frequented on a regular basis?

2 How does the focus person make choices about going to these places or participating in the setting?

3 What does the focus person do when they get to these settings?

4 Does the focus person frequent these settings alone, in small groups, or in large groups?

5 Are there places in the community where the focus person would be supported in exercising self-determination?

6 Are there places in the community where the focus person would not be supported in exercising self-determination?

7 How does the focus person get to these places, and what are the transportation issues?

8 Are the places in community or human service settings?

9 Where does the focus person go to do school work, and what kind of transportation does the person use to get there?

10 What does the focus person do at the home setting?

11 How does the focus person make choices about these activities at home?

12 How does the focus person make choices about going to these places or participating in the setting?

4 · Preferences

In this fourth section of the personal futures planning session, the family discusses the focus person's preferences, in other words, what does and doesn't work for the focus person. On one side of the "Preference Map" the facilitator will list the family's ideas about what works for the focus person, and the facilitator will list what doesn't work on the other side of the Preference Map.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on the Focus Person's Preferences

1 What type of person does the focus person find hard to get along with, or think it is hard to get along with?

2 What are the most enjoyable choices the focus person makes?

3 What are the choices the focus person makes that are the most frustrating?

4 What type of person does the focus person get along with, or think it is easy to get along with?

5 What are the things that the focus person most enjoys doing, the things that motivate and are interesting?

6 What are the things that are boring, frustrating or undesirable to the focus person?

7 What conditions, activities, and settings are most enjoyable?

8 What conditions, activities, and settings are most frustrating?

9 Are there people the focus person would like to spend less time with?

10 In what ways can positive experiences be increased and negative experiences decreased?

5 · Choices

In this section, the family discusses the choices made by the person independently, and choices made by the focus person and others. Many choices will fall into both categories, in other words, in some circumstances a choice can be made independently, and in other situations the choice is made with the help of another person. This can be indicated graphically with arrows showing that the choice falls into both categories.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information about Choices

1 What are the choices the focus person makes independently at home?

2 What are the choices the focus person makes independently in school?

3 What are the choices the focus person makes independently regarding peers?

4 What are the choices the focus person makes together with parents at home, regarding school, or peers?

5 What are the choices the focus person makes together with their teachers regarding their education?

6 · Focus on the Future for Self-Determination Goals

In this final section of the personal futures planning session the family discusses their goals for the focus person. Families may want to use the information from the previous discussions to help formulate and organize their ideas. The focus on the future can include long and short term goals in self-determination, as well as an understanding of the supports needed for the focus person to reach these goals. The family's ideas will be documented, and if desired, prioritized on the "Focus on the Future Map".

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on the Focus Person's Focus for the Future in Self-Determination Goals

1. What images does the focus person have for the future in self-determination?
2. What unrecognized dreams and hopes does the focus person have for the future in self-determination?
3. What supports are needed?
4. What are the creative ways to link the preferences of the focus person with the opportunities available in the community?
5. What is the family's comfort level for these goals to occur?

At the conclusion of the personal futures planning session, facilitators should indicate to the family that their discussion has provided valuable information about the focus person, and that a copy of the written document will be made for the focus person and the family to have. The information and ideas that are documented on the "Personal Futures Map" can be referred back to throughout the family's participation in the self-determination curriculum.

The Personal Futures Planning Process adapted with permission from Abery, B., et. al., (1994). *Self-determination for youth with disabilities: A family education curriculum.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

Appendix E
Transition Resources

The following resources may be useful in the transition-planning process:

Begin the Between:
Planning for the Transition from High School to Adult Life (1996)
This guide reviews basic issues on successful transition from high school to adult and community living. It provides strategies for planning and an introduction to the adult service system. Free to parents of Minnesota high school aged children and young adults with disabilities; a small fee for others. Available through PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417. 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

Community Transition Interagency Committee Yearly Summary
This is the annual report on the status of CTICs in Minnesota, compiled for the Minnesota Department of Education by the Institute on Community Integration. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

IMPACT: Feature Issue on School-to-Work and Students with Developmental Disabilities (1999)
This publication describes programs where learners with developmental and other disabilities are fully included in school-to-work activities, as well as strategies, attitudes, and policies necessary for inclusion of all learners in school-to-work. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

IMPACT: Feature Issue on Transition (1992)
This publication focuses on transition issues for young adults with disabilities. It includes articles related to transition policy, service needs, and strategies for designing effective transition programs. Profiles of students who have successfully made the transition from high school to adult life are also included. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Life Beyond the Classroom:
Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities (1996)
This book by Paul Wehman provides a comprehensive guide to planning and implementing transition services at the individual and local levels. The volume includes chapters devoted to the unique needs of youth from a number of different disability

groups. Issues relevant to interagency teaming, working with families, secondary educational program design and development, and job development are addressed in detail. Available from Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-9945, 800/638-3775.

Rehabilitation Services: They're Working* *(1995)
This 25-minute videotape describes the services available from the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services. The referral process, eligibility criteria, individualized plan development, and other services are described. The video is available from the Division of Rehabilitation Services, 1210 East College Drive, Marshall, MN 56258, 507/537-7280.

Speak up for Health* *(1998)
This 15-minute video is about young people who understand their health care needs, who value independence, and who speak out on their own behalf. In addition, it is about parents who recognize and support the need for knowledge and independence in the area of health care. Available from PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417, 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

Speak up for Health: A Handbook for Parents* *(1998)
This publication focuses on preparing adolescents with chronic illness and disabilities for independence in health care. It covers topics such as letting go, self-advocacy, communicating with health care professionals, adolescent sexuality, and paying for health care. Available from PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417, 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

Supported Employment: A Step-by-Step Guide* *(1992)
By Cathleen Urbaine, Supported Employment Project Coordinator at PACER Center. This booklet was designed to help persons with disabilities and their families obtain or improve supported employment by explaining how the adult service system works, describing some current "best practices," giving tips to help individuals access supported employment, and suggesting ways to help bring supported employment into a community. Available from PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55417, 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

Transition Policy in Minnesota – A Glance Back, A Look Ahead* *(1993)
This document is an outcome of a number of community forums conducted around the state as well as interviews with key stakeholders. Over 60 recommendations for service improvement are made at three areas of service delivery: individual, community, and state. Copies of this report can be ordered by contacting: Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Transition-Related Websites

School-to-Work Internet Gateway, School-to-Work National Office
http://www.stw.ed.gov/
This site provides information on research, evaluation, technical assistance providers, events calendar, hot topics, post and chat, school-to-work links, and more. Download the most recent School-to-Work (STW) Progress Measures Evaluation, review Gifted Education STW Models, and explore statistics, fact sheets, tools, programs, discussion and careers, young worker safety and health, and more.

The National School-to-Work Learning & Information Center
http://www.stw.ed.gov/general/general.htm
This Website is sponsored by the National School-to-Work Office and maintained by the National STW Learning & Information Center. Touted as the premier Web location for resources, news, state information, and STW events, the site offers information for anyone interested in school-to-work: new visitors, educators, parents, students, researchers, grantors, employers and partnerships.

National Center for Research in Vocational Education
http://www.ncrve.berkeley.edu/
This is the nation's largest center for research and development in work-related education. It includes full-length reports, newsletters, and digests, descriptions of programs, projects, services, and information, as well as links to other vocational education resources.

National Employer Leadership Council (NELC)
http://www.nelc.org
The NELC is a coalition of CEOs whose mission is to enhance the quality of the nation's workforce and improve the productivity and competitiveness of American businesses through work-based learning opportunities for all students. Member CEOs have pledged to sustain their own work-based learning programs and promote school-to-work issues, both within their own companies and between the business world and the general public. Alex Trotman, Chair of Ford Motor Company, is the NELC Chair.

School-to-Careers Web Guide
http://www.thomson.com/rcenters/stc/default.html
This Website is designed to facilitate distribution of School-to-Careers (STC) information to educators, students, and businesses. It includes a glossary of terms, STC catalog, curriculum guide, calendar of events, STC news, STC links, and more.

Northwest Center for Equity and Diversity (NCED)
http://www.edcc.ctc.edu/nwcenter/
The NCED is a regional resource center focused on promoting gender equity and cultural diversity in education, business, and the community. The site includes STW Mentoring Project Net-

work, Promoting Equity in STW legislation, Activities of the NW Center for Equity, Instructional Resources, and links.

National Transition Alliance (NTA)
http://www.aed.org/Transition/Alliance/NTA.html
The NTA is a partnership that unites the expertise of people within public institutions and private organizations to create bright futures for all youth transitioning from school to employment, post secondary experiences, and independent living. The site includes an overview of the NTA and its partners, products, databases, and resources.

Institute on Community Integration
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ici/
Located at the University of Minnesota, this University Affiliated Program is dedicated to improving community services and social supports for persons with developmental disabilities and their families, with an emphasis on the full inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities in all areas of community living. The Institute currently conducts over 70 research and training projects addressing disability issues across the life span. ICI's Website includes an overview of the Institute, publications catalog, reports and resource guides, projects online, and other disability-related services.

National Center to Improve Practices in Special Education
http://www.edc.org/FSC/NCIP/links.html
This national resource center seeks to improve practices in special education through technology, media, and materials. Links include technology and disability, disability resources, specific sites, special education, family and parent support, government resources, funding, universities with special education resources, and more.

US Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov/index.html
This site, sponsored by National Library of Education, provides information about offices and programs of the U.S. Department of Education, education initiatives of the President and the Secretary, full text of education reports, FAQs and fact sheets, grant and financial aid information, links to other organizations, and more.

ERIC Digests
http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/index/abtERICDIG.html
ERIC Digests are short reports on topics of prime current interest in education targeted specifically to teachers, administrators, policymakers, and other practitioners, but can be useful to the broad educational community.

US Department of Labor
http://www.dol.gov
This site provides information about the department, its agencies and programs, the laws and regulations it administers widely, media releases, labor-related data, contract and grant information, and other links related to labor issues. This site also allows for searches of topics using their search engine.

American Vocational Association
http://www.avaonline.org
This site provides information about the use of educational leadership in developing competitive work force. It also has information about legislation and such publications as *Techniques, School-To-Work Reporter* and *Vocational Education Weekly.*

National Career Development Association (NCDA)
http://www.uncg.edu/~ericcas2/ncda/
This site provides information to the public and to professionals interested in career development, including professional development activities, publications, research, public information, professional standards, advocacy, and more. The NCDA is sponsored by the National Career Development Association in collaboration with The ERIC Clearinghouse for counseling and student services.

Center on Education and Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison
http://www.cew.wisc.edu
This site provides information on work the center has done in identifying and responding to issues that affect the connection among education, work, community, and family. The site has information about solutions, capacity building, and technical assistance.

US Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education-OVAE
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/
This site provides information about the office of vocational and adult education, its programs, grants, what is happening and working in the field and how it can be of service to people so that states and localities will be successful in meeting the National Education Goals by the year 2000.

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities-NICHCY
http://www.nichcy.org
This site provides information on disability and disability-related issues for families, educators and other professionals.

Business Economics Education Foundation-BEEF
http://www.beef-mn.org
Over the past 22 years, the Business Economics Education Foundation (BEEF) has worked diligently to develop partnerships with businesses and organizations committed to answering com-

munity educational problems that would otherwise go unchallenged. Business professionals and educators continue to identify and provide the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare for the challenges of the workplace.

Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge–ISEEK
http://www.iseek.org/
Career options, Minnesota Job Bank openings, and college and training programs are posted or linked at this site. A link to school Websites is planned for January 1999, and a link to multiple job boards, newspaper classified ads, etc. is scheduled for June 1999. The site is developed in partnership with the Minnesota Association of Private Postsecondary Schools, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development, Minnesota Higher Education Services Office, Minnesota Office of Technology, Minnesota Private College Council, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), and the University of Minnesota. Funding provided by the Minnesota State Legislature.

Learning For Life: A Program for Education
http://www.learnforlife.org/
Learning For Life was developed to provide schools with help meeting the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 by incorporating school-based learning, connecting activities, and work-based learning. Programs start at the junior high and middle school level and extend to senior high and emphasize the areas of career opportunities, service learning, life skills, character education and leadership experience. This site features *Police Box—Teachers Resource*, and information about Life Choices, Learn For Life's interactive computer game on CD-ROM. "Learning For Life adopts a values education life skills approach and is to address contemporary social issues of particular relevance to the whole school family."

Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS)
http://cfl2.state.mn.us/mcis/about.html
MCIS is designated as Minnesota's official career information delivery system by the Minnesota Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (MOICC). MCIS collects current occupational and educational information and develops it into usable forms. Its computer programs and publications provide school and career information to students and adults involved in career planning.

Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning
http://children.state.mn.us/
This site provides information and links to a large amount of information including:
graduation standards (http://children.state.mn.us/grad/

gradhom.htm), teacher licensing (http://children.state.mn.us/licen/license.htm), youth service/youth development (http://www.mnydys.org/) and school-to-work (http://children.state.mn.us/stw/index.html).

National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC)
http://www.noicc.gov
This site offers information on job, career and labor markets; career development and counseling tools; Web-based career development library; training and professional improvement programs; occupational licensing information; and provides links to NOICC and national partners.

Minnesota Careers Online
http://www.des.state.mn.us/lmi/careers/
Minnesota Careers is a published by the Research & Statistics Office of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES). Like the print version, the *Career Information* section takes you to a listing of career clusters. Each section contains a brief description of the career, education requirements, wage ranges, and projected job outlook. *Careers by Category* details careers by different topics, such as what careers are shrinking in size, what careers pay the most, and what careers require the most education. *Selecting a Career* is an area that helps users determine which career is right for them. *Selecting a School* contains specific information on the state's technical, college, and university academic programs.

National Transition Network
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn/
The National Transition Network (NTN), housed at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), University of Minnesota, provides technical assistance and evaluation services to states with grants for Transition Systems Change and School-to-Work Implementation and Development. The general mission of NTN is to strengthen the capacity of individual states to effectively improve transition and school-to-work policies, programs, and practices as they relate to youth with disabilities. In addition to direct technical assistance to states with projects, NTN develops and disseminates a variety of policy publications and other networking activities.

Other Print Resources

Meeting the Needs of Youth with Disabilities: Handbook on Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives and Transition Students (1998)
A handbook designed for school personnel, IEP/transition team members, adult service providers, parents, and others who are involved in student-focused transition planning. The handbook is intended to serve as a resource for understanding how Supplemental Security Income (SSI) work incentives can be included in

the IEP/transition plan for students who have paid employment through a community-based vocational education program in high school. It is also useful as they begin to work or plan for further training upon graduation. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. This handbook is also published on the World Wide Web at — http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn

Meeting the Needs of Youth With Disabilities: Examples of Transition Students Utilizing Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives (1999)
This publication focuses on two of the SSI work incentives — Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE) — and uses detailed examples of each to demonstrate how students with disabilities can benefit from them when utilized during the transition planning process. Four examples are provided for the PASS and three examples are provided to illustrate the IRWE. The publication is intended for school personnel and any other individuals involved in the transition planning process for students with disabilities. It will be most effective when used in conjunction with *Meeting the Needs of Youth with Disabilities: Handbook on Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives and Transition Students.* Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Ensuring Access, Equity, and Quality for Students with Disabilities in School-to-Work Systems — A Guide to Federal Law and Policies (1999)
Developed by the Center for Law and Education and the National Transition Network, this publication can help state and local administrators to be aware of key federal legislation and policies that specifically address the participation of youth with disabilities in the full range of school-to-work opportunities. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Cost: $10.00

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Transition Requirements — A Guide for States, Districts, Schools, and Families (1999)
Jointly developed by the Western Regional Resource Center, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, and the National Transition Network, the purpose of this publication is to provide guidance to state, district, and school personnel, and to family organizations to ensure that the transition requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 are implemented appropriately for youth with disabilities. It has been designed to address all of the transition components in the federal requirements and to provide examples and suggest practices for meeting those requirements. Available Fall 1999 from the In-

stitute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Cost: TBA.

School to What?
A newsletter containing information on including all learners in school-to-work. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Call 612/624-4512 to be placed on the free subscription list.

What's Working in Transition?
A quarterly newsletter containing articles on ideas, strategies, and practices related to transition planning and youth with disabilities in Minnesota. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Call 612/624-4512 to be placed on the free subscription list.

National Transition Network Parent Briefs
Summaries, written for parents, of the new transition requirements of IDEA, vocational rehabilitation, and SSI. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

National Transition Network Policy Update
Summaries of policies and issues related to the transition of youth from school to adult life. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Many of the *Parent Briefs* and *Policy Updates* are also published on the World Wide Web at: http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn.

Work-Based Learning-How to Advance Occupational Skill Development and Career Awareness for All Learners?
This manual assists partnerships to develop the work-based component of a school-to-work system. It is intended to help communities including schools, businesses, learners, parents and civic groups in the development of partnerships. It assists partnerships in the marketing of work-based learning activities, identifying work-based learning experiences and providing the standards of best practices found in successful work-based learning experiences. In addition the manual will help to increase the partnership awareness of legal considerations when implementing work-based learning activities and help connect work-based learning with educational reform efforts. For more information contact The Minnesota School-To-Work Initiative at 888/234-5120 or visit http://cfl.state.mn.us/stw.

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References & Resources

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Transparencies

What is Transition?

Federal definition:

… a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to postschool activities including:

- Postsecondary education
- Vocational training
- Integrated employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living (home living)
- Community participation
- Recreation and leisure

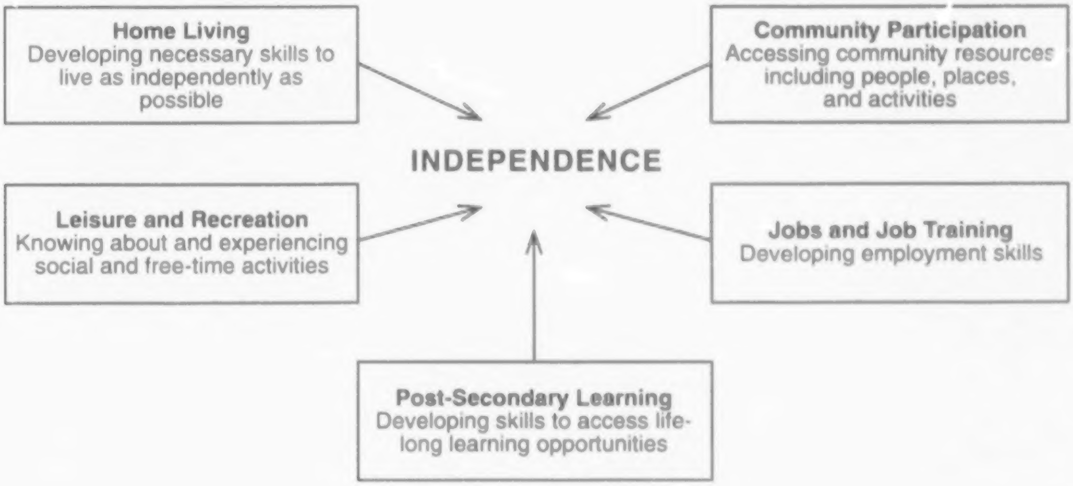
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA (PL 101-476)

Minnesota definition:

...students' needs and the special education instruction and services to be provided shall be agreed upon through the development of an individual education plan (IEP). The plan shall address the student's need to develop skills to live and work as independently as possible within the community. By grade 9 or age 14, the plan must include a statement of the needed transition services, including a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages or both before secondary services are concluded.

Minnesota Statutes 120.17

Five Areas of Transition Planning



Home Living
Developing necessary skills to live as independently as possible

Community Participation
Accessing community resources including people, places, and activities

INDEPENDENCE

Leisure and Recreation
Knowing about and experiencing social and free-time activities

Jobs and Job Training
Developing employment skills

Post-Secondary Learning
Developing skills to access life-long learning opportunities

The Need for Transition Planning

- 250,000–300,000 special education learners leave school annually. Many need ongoing community services.

  (U.S. Department of Education)

- 50–75% of adults with disabilities are unemployed. This is over eight times the rate for persons without disabilities.

  (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights)

- Of those adults with disabilities who do work, only 1 in 4 works full-time, with under-employment remaining a problem.

  (Harris Poll, 1986)

- Individuals with disabilities earn much less than individuals who do not have disabilities.

  (Census Data, 1980)

- 38% of individuals with disabilities said they are under-educated and have no marketable skills

  (Harris Poll, 1986)

Essential Members of an IEP/Transition Planning Team

Must be Present	Must be Invited	May be Invited
Administrator or designee	The student	Related service provider
Regular education teacher	One or both parents	Representatives of non-school agency
Special education teacher	Member of assessment team	Other individuals invited by student or parents
		Representative of outside district

1.4

Special Education System

- Services are required for all individuals identified as having a disability.
- No waiting lists allowed.
- Individually based services; narrow eligibility criteria and school services may exist.
- Some services may not be available.

Adult Education System

- Services are not required; having a disability does not guarantee services.
- Long waiting lists may exist.
- One provider delivers all services.
- Many agencies may deliver services to a single student.

Community Service Agencies

- Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
- State Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (SSB)
- County social service departments
- Private Industry Councils/Job Training Partnership Act
- Rehabilitation facilities/day training and habilitation centers
- Employers
- Postsecondary schools
- Community members
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Other resources

Communication Styles

- Passive
- Aggressive
- Assertive

4.1

Personal Problem-Solving Strategies

1 DEFINE

- The problem as one person sees it
- The problem as the other person sees it
- Develop a common or shared definition

2 ASK

- Who is involved
- How are they involved
- What behaviors or attitudes of the different individuals need to be changed

3 LIST

- Areas of mutual agreement concerning problems
- Areas of disagreement
- The barriers to finding a solution

4 DEVELOP

- Desired goals
- Solutions by brainstorming various ideas
- A list of resources, information, or assistance that will help you achieve the goal

5 IMPLEMENT

- The solution for a specific time period and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution
- If necessary, select and implement another alternative

Objective Observation Means:

1. Watching events without being affected by personal biases or prejudices.
2. Watching what is happening without guessing at the reasons that cause the action.
3. Watching the activity without judging whether it's good or bad.
4. Producing an objective record which states exactly what an observer sees and hears.

Future Adult Goals

Annual Goals

Objectives
(*are measurable and observable*)

- behavior
- criteria
- condition

5.2

What is a Family?

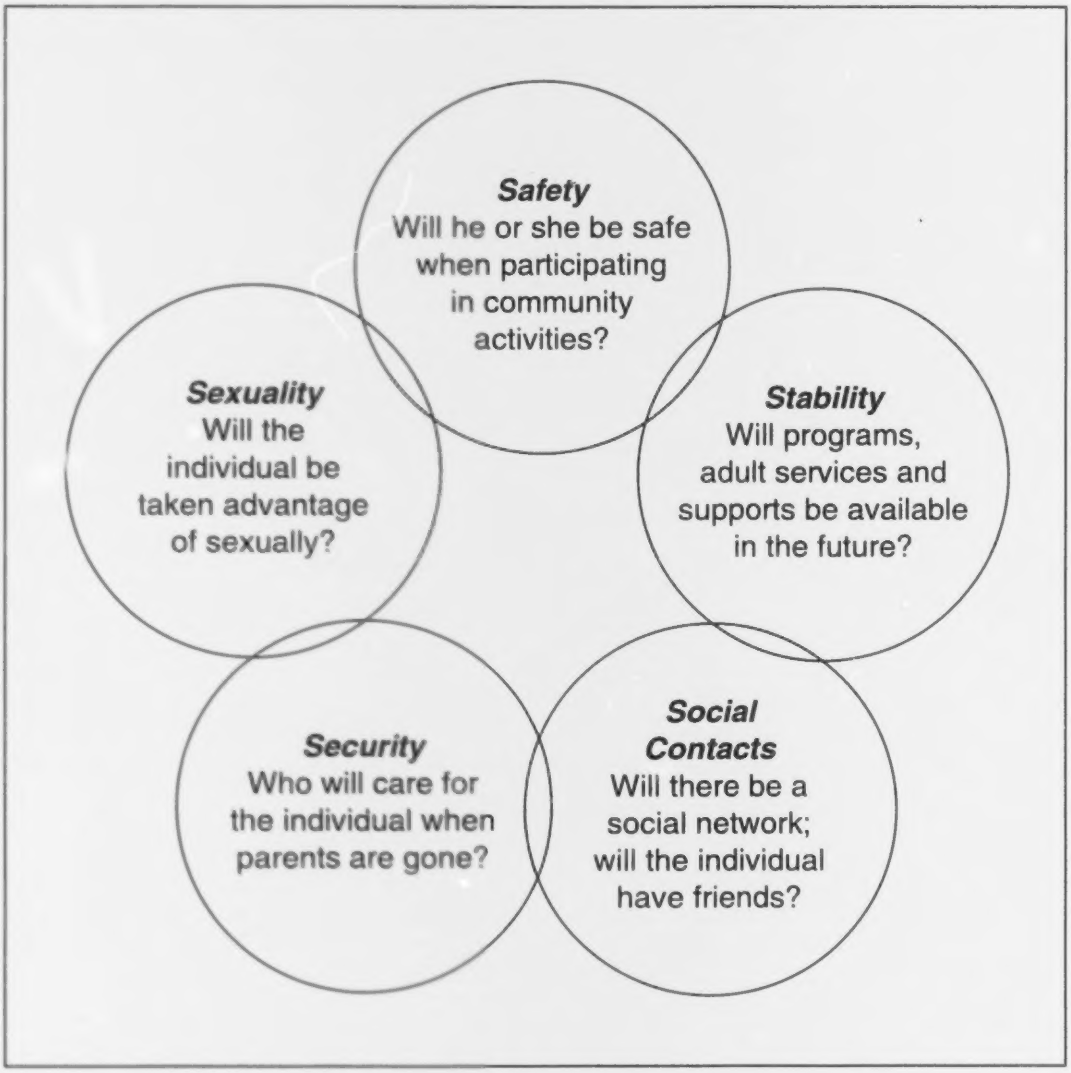
A family is two or more individuals who may or may not share blood ties or be related by marriage, who share similar values and attitudes.

Adult members of this group take responsibility for the student living with them by providing for education, values training, clothing, and food.

The individuals in the group see themselves as united in their goals and aspirations.

Used with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). A *core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Circles of Fear


Safety
Will he or she be safe when participating in community activities?
Sexuality
Will the individual be taken advantage of sexually?
Stability
Will programs, adult services and supports be available in the future?
Security
Who will care for the individual when parents are gone?
Social Contacts
Will there be a social network; will the individual have friends?

Roles Parents Play in Transition Planning

- Providers of unique information
- Role models
- Case managers
- Program advocates
- Advocates for career education in school programs
- Risk takers
- Financial planners

6.3

Career Exploration Options

- Job shadowing
- Professionals visit the school
- School-based vocational classes
- Reviewing job resources

Work Experience Options

- Community-based job tryouts
- Supported employment
- Individual placement model
- Mobile work crew
- Industrial enclave
- Postsecondary job training
- Competitive employment

Creating Employment Opportunities

1 **Determine** student needs and desires.

2 **Research** target businesses, including personnel, training, retention, competition, and technical issues.

3 **Visit** sample target businesses.

4 **Inventory** activities of typical workers performing target tasks.

5 **Observe** corporate culture, including rules and rituals.

6 **Task analyze** duties and determine consumer capabilities, training, and assistance needs.

7 **Negotiate** with employer.

8 **Teach** and refine tasks.

9 **Build** on typical supports and relationships.

10 **Fade**.

11 **Maintain** a consultative role.

What is a Home?

Home is where one lives that allows security and personal identity and serves as a place to plan and prepare for all of life's activities and interactions with society.

Home is where a person should feel safe to think and behave as he or she sees fit. Whether it be a child's hideaway, a bedroom in a multi-dwelling house, or one's own apartment, everyone needs a space to escape and feel safe and secure.

Home is where the atmosphere reflects the personality and tastes of the dweller. Decor, furniture, wall decorations, plants, and knick-knacks turn a structure into a home and impart the feeling of security and familiarity that every person seeks.

Considerations for choosing a home:

- Housing alternatives
- Meal planning
- Housekeeping
- Safety
- Personal care
- Personal development

Post-Secondary Education & Training

1 Understanding strengths and limitations
2 Self-advocacy
3 Social interactions
4 Self-monitoring
5 Time management
6 Study skills
7 Problem solving

Community Participation

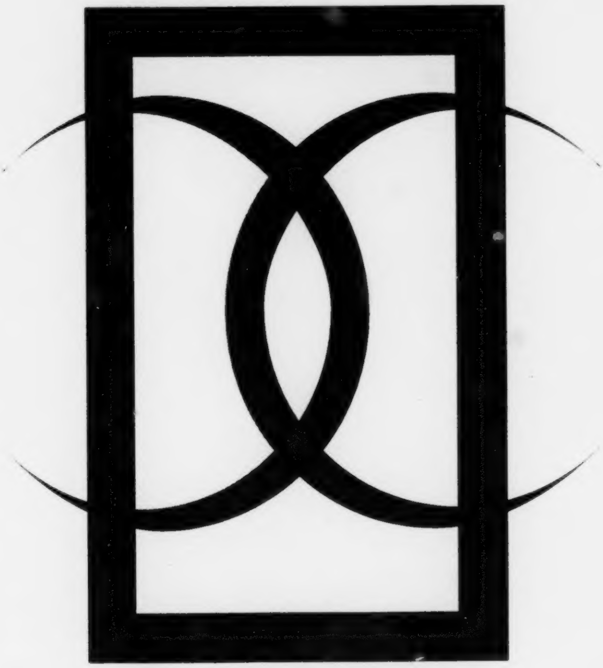
1. Transportation
2. Financial planning
3. Medical and dental care
4. Consumer awareness

10.1

Recreation & Leisure Options

1. Inclusive and accessible recreation
2. Integrated recreation and systematic supports
3. Adaptive or "special" recreation

Strategies for Paraprofessionals Who Support
Individuals with Disabilities



Transition
The Role of the Paraprofessional

Student Edition

Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
The College of Education
& Human Development
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The paraprofessional training module *Transition: The Role of the Paraprofessional* was prepared at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

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Introduction

An Introduction to the Curriculum

The need for paraprofessionals to work with persons who have disabilities has been growing in recent years. Increasing numbers of persons with a range of disabilities are now living in small residential settings in our communities, attending regular classes in neighborhood schools, holding jobs in local businesses, and participating in community recreation and social activities. There is a great need for paraprofessionals to provide the services and supports these individuals need for community living.

By employing paraprofessionals, educational and other services for persons with disabilities are able to expand and improve the quality of assistance they provide. Some of the benefits paraprofessionals offer schools, agencies, and individuals with disabilities are the following:

- Expanded learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- More individualized instruction.
- Increased planning time for educators, supervisors, and others.
- Better monitoring and evaluation of persons with disabilities.
- Greater consistency in services.
- Improved parent-school relationships.
- Greater involvement of persons with disabilities in education and other settings in the community at large.
- Increased transportation assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Expanded vocational skill development for individuals with disabilities.

The Role of Today's Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals who work with individuals with disabilities have a variety of roles and definitions, depending on the environment in which they work. For example, one definition of educational paraprofessionals includes the following:

A paraprofessional is an employee:

- Whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct services to individuals and/or their parents.
- Who works under the supervision of a professional staff member who is responsible for the overall management of the program area including the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and the individual's progress.

Paraprofessionals provide services in the following areas:

- Educational programs
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Recreation programs
- Early intervention and preschool programs
- Social work/case management
- Parent training/child-find programs
- Vocational training programs and job coaching
- Community programs
- Transition and school-to-work

Paraprofessionals are typically different from professionals in the amount of education, certification required for the job, degree of responsibility, and extent of supervision required.

Because the support of paraprofessionals is so essential to the success of individuals with disabilities, this module is dedicated to improving and enhancing skills for paraprofessionals.

Information in *The Role of Today's Paraprofessional* adapted from: Pickett, A.L. (1997). Paraeducators in school settings: Framing the issues. In Pickett, A.L. & Gerlach, K. (Eds.) *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach* (page 4). Austin, TX: PRO-ED. Copyright 1997 by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted and reprinted by permission.

About the Module

Whether you have years of experience working with persons who have disabilities or are just beginning, there are probably many questions you have about the role of a paraprofessional. Some concerns and questions will be very specific to your work setting, while others will be more general. This module will cover both.

This curriculum is primarily for paraprofessionals who are (or will be) working in educational settings (i.e., special and general education). It will, however, also be useful for those in direct service settings, such as vocational programs and residential settings.

The training you are about to begin will not only address the current reality for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities, but more importantly, the challenges for the future in your career as a paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals aren't expected to have a total understanding of all the concepts in these modules, but the paraprofessional who has a working knowledge of these core concepts will be most effective.

Philosophy and Key Beliefs

This module was developed using a general philosophy including six key beliefs for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities. Those beliefs include:

- The individual with a disability is the ultimate locus of control and is the most important member in the decision-making process.
- The family is the other primary locus of control. Family involvement is essential in any decision-making process.
- The team concept is essential in setting up a plan with an individual. This team includes the individual, the family, and all those working with the individual, including the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional is an essential link between what is and what can be for the individual. The best follow-through on any plan comes from teamwork.
- The community should be the basis for all training, as much as possible. This means that, whether offering real-life examples in the classroom or working in real life situations in the community, the focus must be on the most natural setting and support possible. This is essential so the individual can make connections between what is being learned on a daily basis and the real world. This will help the individual generalize the experience to similar situations in his or her life.
- Inclusion is the goal. This means that individuals with disabilities should be included in the mainstream of society – work, school, and recreation. Devotion to such a model will create the most positive results for the individuals and society as a whole. Inclusion suggests that we can and will all benefit by learning to work and live side by side with each other.
- The most effective paraprofessional will be the individual who has a good self-esteem and is able to be assertive. The assertive paraprofessional is able to ask for support and guidance from staff.

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

The Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium has recently developed and published some important information related to paraprofessionals, including new legislation, guiding principles, and core and specialized competencies. This information can be found in Appendix B at the back of this module. While some of the information is specific to Minnesota, much of it is applicable to paraprofessionals across the country.

After the Training

You will leave this training with more information about paraprofessionals than you had when you started. It's important to remember that no matter how much knowledge you have about your job, the individuals you work with are your greatest trainers. Each one is unique and has his or her own interests and needs. The greatest responsibility you have is to listen to those interests and needs, remember what you have learned, ask what is needed, and use that information in your working relationship and responsibilities.

Therefore, use this training as a basis and build your skills from this point, drawing upon each setting and individual. Whether consumer, student, teacher, supervisor, principal, director, or superintendent, you will learn from each. With each setting and situation, your confidence, ability, and skills will continue to grow. Remember, this training is only as good as the degree to which you use what you learn; seek assistance so you can "do what you know."

1

Chapter One

Transition from School to Adult Life

1 Introduction
1 Section 1 Transition
4 Section 2 The Transition Team
5 Summary
6 Questions to Ponder

Introduction

More than ever, school districts across the country are turning to paraprofessionals to help them meet the rising educational demands placed on educators and students. Consequently, paraprofessionals are facing new challenges and taking on more responsibilities. Long gone are the days of sitting in the back of the classroom monitoring student behavior and keeping records. Today's paraprofessionals are teaming up with educators and service providers to work directly with students both in and out of the classroom (Pickett, 1993).

Nowhere is the role of the paraprofessional more important or visible than in the lives of students with disabilities who are planning their transition from school to adult life. To prepare for life after high school, many students are spending a considerable part of their school day in community settings. Through real-life, hands-on experiences, students are gaining the skills they will need to live and work independently in their communities. The shift to community, experiential learning has created exciting opportunities for paraprofessionals to support students outside of the traditional school environment. This chapter will define and outline the transition process and illustrate the importance of individualized transition services for students with disabilities.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define and describe transition.
- Recognize and understand the five transition areas that must be addressed in the IEP of each student who receives special education services.
- Discuss why transition planning and services are important.
- List the individuals who must be present in a student's IEP/transition team.
- List the individuals who must be invited and who may be invited to participate on the IEP/transition team.

Section 1

Transition

What is Transition?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, PL 101-476) defines transition as:

> ...a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement

from school to post-school activities including:

- Post-secondary education.
- Vocational training.
- Integrated employment (including supported employment).
- Continuing and adult education.
- Adult services.
- Independent living (home living).
- Community participation.
- Recreation and leisure.

According to this federal definition, transition services must be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. Services may include instruction, community experience, and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives. When appropriate, services should also include help with the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Minnesota law takes the federal law a step further, requiring that all students receiving special education services must have individually based transition goals and objectives written into their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by age fourteen. (See the sample IEP in Appendix A.)

Minnesota transition law states:

> ...students' needs and the special education instruction and services to be provided shall be agreed upon through the development of an individual education plan (IEP). The plan shall address the student's need to develop skills to live and work as independently as possible within the community. By grade nine or age fourteen, the plan must include a statement of the needed transition services, including a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages or both before secondary services are concluded.
>
> (Minnesota Statute 120.17)

For additional information, see the additional disability-related legislation located in Appendix C.

Which Transition Areas Must be Addressed?

There are five transition areas that must be assessed and included in the IEPs of all students aged fourteen and over in Minnesota who receive special education services. Individualized goals and related objectives are required for students in each of the following transition areas:

- **Community participation:** Accessing community resources including people, places, and activities in the community.
- **Home living:** Developing necessary skills to live as independently as possible.

- **Recreation and leisure:** Knowing about and experiencing social and free-time activities.
- **Jobs and job training:** Developing employment skills.
- **Postsecondary training and education:** Developing skills to access life-long learning opportunities

Why are Transition Services & Planning So Important?

Transition planning has traditionally been thought of as "how to prepare young people for the world of work." While job training and experiences are important, they are only one component in the transition process. Effective transition planning looks beyond just employment and takes a "whole life" approach. It is a future plan for life. By looking at all aspects of a person's life — where they will live, work, and socialize — students leave school better prepared to face the challenges of adult life. Successful transition planning identifies the individual needs of the person first and then designs a plan accordingly.

Here are some statistics to illustrate the importance of and need for transition planning:

- Between 250,000 and 300,000 special education learners leave school annually. Many have needs for ongoing community services (U.S. Department of Education).
- Between 50–75% of adults with disabilities are unemployed. This is over eight times the rate of people without disabilities (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights).
- Only one in four of those adults with disabilities who work do so full time, with underemployment remaining a problem (Harris Poll, 1986).
- Individuals with disabilities earn much less than individuals who don't have disabilities (Census Data, 1980).
- Thirty-eight percent of individuals with disabilities said they are undereducated and have no marketable skills (Harris Poll, 1986).

These statistics underscore the importance of transition planning for students with disabilities. It's imperative that students, with the support of their families, teachers, and other important people in their lives, take an active step to ensure that they leave school with the skills they need to lead satisfying and healthy adult lives.

Section 2

The Transition Team

Who is Involved in Transition Planning?

No one person, school, or agency is solely responsible for transition planning. Effective transition planning takes place through the collaborative efforts of many people who make up a transition planning team. This team includes the student, his or her family, school administrators, teachers, rehabilitation counselors, county case managers, community service providers, and other important people in a student's life. Paraprofessionals may also be asked to participate on a transition team which meets regularly and is responsible for seeing that all students aged fourteen or older, who receive special education services, have transition goals and objectives written into their IEPs.

Essential Members of an IEP/Transition Planning Team

The following individuals must be present:

- An administrator or administrative designee. The administrator may be the school principal or director of special education; an administrative designee may be a special educator authorized by the principal to commit district resources.
- The student's regular education teacher. An appropriate regular classroom teacher must be present even when the student has no regular education placement.
- A special education teacher holding the license of the student's primary disability.

The following individuals must be invited:

- The student must be invited to his or her IEP/transition planning meeting. Students should always be involved in their transition planning process and encouraged to attend their own meetings.
- One or both parents of the student must also be invited to any meeting where transition services will be discussed, and they must be informed that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss transition planning. The school must also tell the parents that the student is invited and identify other agency personnel who will be invited. In all cases it's the responsibility of the district to communicate with the parents in their primary language, including sign language.
- A member of the assessment team must be invited. This may be the student's teacher, a representative of the district, or

some other person who is knowledgeable about the assessment procedures used with the student.

The following individuals may be invited to attend, as appropriate:

- Paraprofessionals who work one-on-one with the student at school and/or in the community.
- Related service providers such as an occupational therapist, physical therapist, audiologist, psychologist, adaptive physical educator, doctor or nurse, rehabilitation counselor, or social worker.
- Representatives of non-school agencies such as a Division of Rehabilitation Services counselor, county case manager, health care provider, residential service provider, supported employment service provider, community leisure service provider, community education representative, or post-secondary education support service facilitator. Involving these individuals early will greatly improve the student's ability to successfully access adult services when they leave school and are no longer entitled to special education services.
- Other individuals at the discretion of the parents and student. For example, a parent or student may invite a person who is a member of the same minority or cultural background, or someone knowledgeable about a student's race, culture, or disabilities. A peer or friend may be able to relate to the student at a student level and support the student's goals. Parents and students need to be informed of their right to bring anyone they choose to the meeting.

Adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work* (p. 12). St. Paul, Minnesota: Author.

Summary

This chapter introduced you to the concepts of transition and transition planning. You have probably begun to think about your role as a paraprofessional in the transition process.

When you're working with students, it may be helpful to think of transition in terms of the five areas that need to be addressed in the IEP of every student who receives special education services. Viewing transition in terms of community participation, home living, recreation and leisure, jobs and job training, and post-secondary training and education underscores the importance and breadth of the transition process for your students.

Many facts and statistics illustrating the importance of providing quality transition planning and services are available. The transition process provides many opportunities for paraprofessionals to make an important positive impact.

Effective transition planning is best done through the collaborative efforts of a transition team. This team must always include *the administrator (or an administrator's designee) and the student's regular and special education teachers.* The student, the student's parent(s), and a member of the student's assessment team must also be invited to participate but don't necessarily have to be present at team meetings. Many others, including paraprofessionals, may be invited when appropriate.

Questions to Ponder

- Spend some time thinking about your own transition from school to adult life. What parts of the transition process were most difficult for you?
- Were there times during your own transition when you may have benefited from the help of a teacher or paraprofessional?
- Think about the unique and important contribution that you as a paraprofessional might make to the transition planning process.
- As a paraprofessional, you may not automatically be invited to participate on the IEP/transition planning team. Can you think of situations where it would be important to let the team know you would like to participate?

2

Chapter Two

Interagency Collaboration

7 **Introduction**
7 **Section 1 Interagency Collaboration**
13 **Summary**
14 **Questions to Ponder**

Introduction

Understanding and accessing the adult service provider system is one of the most confusing aspects of transition planning for students with disabilities. Adult service agencies provide a variety of employment, financial, independent living, housing, and recreation services to adults with disabilities. These agencies operate under different rules, regulations, and eligibility criteria than the special education system.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Appreciate the differences between the special education agencies and adult service agencies.
- Understand the importance of collaboration between and among these agencies and service providers in the planning process.
- Recognize adult community service agencies by name and be able to describe what they do.
- Begin thinking of ways to educate your students and their families about available service agencies and options.
- Begin to think of ways to encourage collaboration among agencies, students, parents, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

Section 1

Interagency Collaboration

Special Education System vs. Adult Service System

The following chart illustrates some of the main differences between the school and adult service delivery systems.

Special Education	Adult System
Services are required for all individuals identified as having a disability.	Services are not required; having a disability does not guarantee services.
No waiting lists allowed.	Long waiting lists may exist.
Individually based services; narrow eligibility criteria and school services may exist.	One provider delivers all services.
Some services may not be available.	Many agencies may deliver services to a single student.

Chart adapted with permission from Colorado Department of Education. (1993). *Colorado transition manual* (p.137). Denver, CO: Author.

As one can see from the chart, adult service representatives must be involved in transition planning to ensure that students receive services. Non-school agencies, community resources, and other service providers (e.g., vocational rehabilitation counselor, county case manager, employers) should be invited to participate in transition planning at least two years before the student is ready to graduate. Schools must provide students and their families with information on post-school options and resources. This information will allow them make informed decisions regarding who should be involved in their transition planning.

Strategies for Building Interagency Partnerships

School staff have a responsibility to build effective partnerships between schools and non-school agencies and resources. The following is a partial list of activities that will help to create and maintain a collaborative environment:

- School staff should invite other community services and agencies, as appropriate, to participate in individualized transition planning.
- School staff and other community services and agencies should develop procedures to define roles, coordinate services, and negotiate services and supports.
- School staff should learn the eligibility criteria, referral procedures, and structures of various agencies.
- School staff should share relevant information about transition planning needs with other community services and agencies.
- School staff should participate in cooperative training with other community services and agencies.
- School staff should participate on local transition planning committees with other agencies and services.
- School staff should establish interagency agreements with other agencies and services regarding program purpose, cooperation in attending planning meetings, and commitments to deliver services.
- School staff should participate in community awareness activities regarding transition services.

The material in *Strategies for Building Interagency Partnerships* adapted with permission from Bates, P. (1990). *Best practices in transition planning: Quality indicators.* Carbondale: Illinois Transition Project.

Community Service Agencies

It will help you to become familiar with service agencies in your area that may potentially be involved in the transition process. The following section lists several agencies and outlines their responsibilities.

Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

An individual may be able to get vocational rehabilitation services if he or she has a disability that makes it hard to get training or find a job. To find out if an individual is eligible for services, a DRS counselor will look at medical and school records. The individual and his or her DRS counselor will then identify the person's assets and limitations and what support is needed. As part of the individual's transition plan, an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) will be developed. DRS provides many services, some of which include:

- Assessment to determine individual needs.
- Guidance in choosing, preparing for, and finding suitable employment.
- Individual vocational counseling during rehabilitation and on the job.
- Assistive technology to increase an individual's ability to work, such as adapted equipment or worksite modifications.
- Vocational training after high school to prepare for employment; this may include tuition, fees, books, and supplies for education in a college, university, trade school, or on-the-job training.
- Assistance with added costs incurred because of a rehabilitation plan.
- Job placement assistance.
- Job-related tools and licenses for individuals who are ready to go to work.

Centers for Independent Living (CIL)

Independent living is often overlooked in the transition-planning process; however, all students need to know how to access support for future living arrangements. Centers for Independent Living can assist students in identifying individual goals in a wide variety of areas: socialization, housing, attendant management, financial management, transportation, sexuality, food preparation, community resources, recreation and leisure activities, health care, peer support, employment and educational opportunities, safety, self-advocacy, individual rights, and time management. The team needs to get information about these resources early in the transition planning process.

State Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (SSB)

If an individual has a visual impairment, with or without additional physical or mental disabilities, SSB can offer assistance in transition planning. An SSB counselor can be part of a student's transition planning team and can assist in creating a transition plan. Some of the services available from SSB include:

- Adjustment to blindness, including orientation and mobility training and rehabilitation counseling.

- Low vision services.
- Counseling.
- Assistance in finding and keeping a job.
- Tools and supplies needed to reach goals.
- Telecommunication and sensory aids.
- Vocational training.

County Social Services

County social services play a crucial role in assisting individuals in meeting a variety of essential daily needs, such as housing, employment, financial support, health care, and transportation. County case managers are the key to accessing these services and supports. The case manager can determine eligibility for services, help identify which services are needed, seek out appropriate services, and coordinate service delivery. Direction for the case manager's involvement comes from a person's Individual Service Plan (ISP). County social services are available in the categories of developmental disabilities, mental health, hearing impairments, and general assistance. Some of the services that may be provided by county social services include:

- Case management to individuals eligible to receive services such as Intermediate Care Facilities for people with mental retardation (ICF/MR), home- and community-based services, semi-independent living services, day training and habilitation services, employment services and support, and mental health services.
- General relief programs, which provide financial assistance to people who need support, are temporarily disabled, and can't qualify under the Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) of the Social Security Administration.
- Medical assistance programs which seeks to provide medical assistance to individuals without health insurance and who qualify for state-funded assistance.
- The food stamp program for people qualifying under income, living arrangement, and maximum-resources requirements.

Private Industry Council – Job Training Partnership Act

The Private Industry Council is a local committee that helps govern the implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The JTPA is a program to enlist employers as partners in vocational training programs; the program can include both work experience and on-the-job training. Activities that occur during transition planning for eligible individuals may include:

- On-the-job training conducted in the work environment to assist the trainee to learn a specific occupation through demonstration and practice.

- Customized training, which often includes classroom education as well as on-the-job training, designed to meet the individual's needs.
- Job search assistance in a small group setting, which could include working on interviewing techniques, resume preparation, uncovering job leads and instruction regarding keeping a job.

Rehabilitation Facilities/Day Training & Habilitation Centers

Both of these types of services require referral from another agency, usually the Division of Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, or county social services. Activities that occur during transition planning for eligible individuals may include:

- Vocational evaluation and counseling.
- Training in daily living, work, and personal or social skills.
- Adult basic education.
- Job placement and follow up.

Employers

Employers can assist during the transition-planning process by:

- Providing information on a student's work habits and skill levels (if the student is working) or information for a student and family on the skills needed for certain kinds of work.
- Offering job sites for training or placement and becoming integrally involved in a student's learning.
- Offering their expertise at "career days" and as guest speakers.
- Encouraging other employers to hire and train students with disabilities.

Advocacy Services

Advocacy services may be available from a number of sources, such as PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights), local Arcs (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens), LDM (Learning Disabilities of Minnesota), the Centers for Independent Living, or the Minnesota Disability Law Center (Legal Advocacy). Services may include:

- Providing advocates for people with disabilities.
- Involvement with legislation affecting people with disabilities.
- Information and referrals regarding potential services.
- Investigation and intervention.
- Legislative support for lawyers who have clients with disabilities.

Postsecondary Schools

Postsecondary education can be pursued in public and private colleges, universities, community colleges, technical colleges, and business and trade schools. Most postsecondary schools have staff specifically assigned to counsel students with disabilities. Some schools work closely with high schools to provide training during the final years of high school. During the transition-planning process, postsecondary support staff can provide information on survival skills, the application process, and support services offered by the institution.

Community Members

Students are first and foremost members of their communities — the places where they work and live, and the people that they know and care about. Therefore, the involvement of community members in the transition process is natural and logical. Communities should be supported in learning about the needs of their citizens with disabilities, and then be expected to include citizens with disabilities in community services, transportation, economic development, housing, recreation and leisure activities, clubs, organizations, etc. People from places of worship, social security, community education, and local councils can be recruited to be part of IEP teams.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI is a federally funded program for U.S. citizens who have disabilities or blindness. To be considered a "disability," the condition must keep the person from "substantial, gainful employment." Generally, any income earned from work amounting to over five hundred dollars a month is considered "substantial, gainful employment" and SSI eligibility monies may be affected, although there are exclusions that can be made that enhance an individual's actual monthly amount. It's important to add that not all income and/or resources are used in determining eligibility. One should apply for SSI one month prior to his or her eighteenth birthday. An individual should work with a representative from Social Security to determine specific benefits. Incentives are available for those who go to work. If a person qualifies for SSI, he or she automatically qualifies for Medical Assistance.

Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)

MSA provides additional financial assistance if SSI and/or employment do not meet living expenses. Eligibility is determined by low income and resources, and monthly benefits differ according to individual need. Applications for MSA can be made at a county department of human services or welfare office. One should note that if a person qualifies for MSA, he or she automatically qualifies for Medical Assistance.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

SSDI is also a federally funded financial assistance program falling under the auspices of the Social Security Administration. To qualify for this program, a person must have worked for a period of time before becoming disabled. A person can also be eligible for SSDI if his or her parents receive Social Security benefits or if the parents have applied for benefits. The death of a parent may also make an individual eligible to receive SSDI. The monthly benefit amount is determined by the wages earned prior to becoming disabled or the earnings made by the parents.

Other Resources

A number of other resources exist that may be useful in the IEP/transition-planning process. For example, a representative from the Social Security office can provide application forms and information regarding rules and regulations for people with disabilities. Mental health centers can provide evaluations and support through therapy, counseling, and consultation. The State Job Service offices provide job listings and can help with making applications and employer contacts. An array of health services such as family planning, nutrition, personal health care, prenatal care, and assistance with ongoing health issues can be provided by public health nurses or other health care providers. Depending on the individual student, representatives from these agencies may be included on the IEP/transition planning team.

Information in *Community Service Agencies* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work.* (p.12). St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

This chapter stresses the importance of understanding and appreciating the many differences between the ways one accesses the adult services system as opposed to the special education system. It's important to include representatives from the adult service system in the transition-planning process. These representatives should be invited to participate at least two years before a student is scheduled to graduate.

The success of the transition process can often depend on the ability to build effective partnerships between schools and nonschool agencies and resources. Paraprofessionals are encouraged to become familiar with the range of community service agencies and other resources that may be in a position to help a student make a smooth and successful transition from the school environment. After becoming familiar with the adult service system, it's important to find creative ways to bring teachers, students, parents, and paraprofessionals together with adult service providers to participate in the planning process.

Questions to Ponder

- Are some of the agencies that were outlined in this chapter unfamiliar to you? What are some ways that you could educate yourself about available services in your area?
- What strategies have you used or seen used to build interagency partnerships? What worked well? What could have been done differently?
- Why is it important to build linkages with adult services when assisting a student with his or her transition preparation?

Chapter Three

3

Roles & Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

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15 **Section 1 Roles & Responsibilities**
18 **Summary**
18 **Questions to Ponder**

Introduction

Paraprofessionals' roles vary greatly depending on the students and professionals with whom they work, as well as the environments in which their responsibilities are carried out. A paraprofessional in a vocational program, for example, will likely spend most of the day with students in community work sites. Paraprofessionals who stay in school all day are much more involved with teachers and students in the classroom. Regardless of their roles, paraprofessionals enhance the learning process for students by creating more time and flexibility for teachers to plan and implement instruction. In addition to supporting teachers, paraprofessionals play an important role with students – offering one-on-one attention that regular and special educators may not be able to provide (Pickett, 1993).

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Develop an appreciation for the many different roles that paraprofessionals can play in the transition process.
- Become familiar with the ethical responsibilities associated with paraprofessional work in transition.
- Recognize situations involving ethical issues and know how to solve or get help with ethical dilemmas.
- Understand the concept of confidentiality and its limits.

Section 1

Roles & Responsibilities

As representatives of a school district, paraprofessionals are expected to uphold certain professional and ethical standards. Most importantly, paraprofessionals must respect the human rights of the students, families, and colleagues with whom they work. Maintaining confidentiality regarding the personal matters of students and families is of utmost importance. Paraprofessionals should become familiar with their school's policies and procedures regarding students' rights to privacy. It's important to note, however, that if a student's safety or well-being is in jeopardy, that information should be reported to the school professional who has ultimate responsibility for that student (Pickett, 1993).

Strategies for Paraprofessional Participation on the Transition Team

The following list represents some of the ways that paraprofessionals can participate in the transition planning process and roles that they may play on the transition team:

- Consult regularly with teachers about student performance during community and vocational training.
- Participate in IEP and transition-planning meetings for individual students.
- Instruct and supervise individual and small groups of students in classrooms, community learning environments, and work sites.
- Use effective social, communication, and problem-solving skills to help students learn self-confidence and self-reliance, and achieve as much autonomy as possible.
- Use appropriate instructional strategies to help students learn skills required to live and work in the community.
- Collaborate with IEP team members when writing transition goals.
- Analyze tasks and develop teaching sequences.
- Use functional assessment instruments (checklists, duration/frequency charts, etc.).
- Collect and record data about student performance.
- Maintain records required by the district or employers.
- Implement behavior-management strategies established for individual students.
- Provide parents and other caregivers with information and assistance they can use to gain access to resources and support services for their child.
- Serve as a link between the school and work sites or other community settings.

Strategies for Maintaining Professionalism & Fulfilling Ethical Responsibilities

The following section provides some guidelines for considering confidentiality and other ethical issues and responsibilities:

- Maintain confidentiality about all personal information and educational records concerning students and their families.
- Respect the legal and human rights of children, youth, and their families.
- Follow district policies for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of students.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the distinctions in the roles of various education personnel.
- Follow the directions of teachers and other supervisors.
- Maintain a record of regular attendance, arrive and depart at specified times, and notify appropriate personnel when absent.

- Demonstrate loyalty, dependability, integrity, and respect for individual differences and other standards of ethical conduct.
- Follow the established chain of command for various administrative procedures.
- Demonstrate a willingness to learn new skills and participate in continuing education provided by the district.

Common Questions About Confidentiality

Paraprofessionals often have questions about maintaining confidentiality when working with students and their families. Here are some answers to some commonly asked questions:

- Why must confidentiality be maintained?
  Federal laws, state regulations, and local policies require it.
- Who may have access to written or oral information about students or their families?
  Only personnel responsible for the design, preparation, and delivery of education and related services; and/or personnel with responsibility for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of a child or youth.
- Who should not have access to information about the performance level, behavior, program goals and objectives, or progress of a child or youth?
  Personnel and others who aren't responsible for planning or providing services to students or their families.
- What information do students and their families have the right to expect will be kept confidential?
  - *The results of formal and informal assessments*
  - *Social and behavioral actions*
  - *Performance levels and progress*
  - *Program goals and objectives*
  - *Information about family relationships and other personal matters*

Confidentiality Case Study

The following scenario is offered as a typical situation that you may encounter as a paraprofessional. As you read about the case, think about how you might handle this situation:

> You have recently been hired by Lincoln School as a para-educator. Before starting work you were told by your supervisor that you're required to maintain confidentiality about the lives and records of the students with whom you work. On your first day on the job, you walk in to the teachers' lounge where you meet Ms. Carlson, who has been teaching at Lincoln for 35 years. Over the years, she has come to know many of the families in the area and has developed opinions, which she frequently shares with others, about their lifestyles and the ways they raise their children. She believes that if some students are

"troublemakers" and "not too bright," their brothers and sisters will be as well.

This year, Ms. Carlson has Elmer in her class and he's behaving exactly like his older brother Tyler did two years ago when she had him as a student. Ms. Carlson begins to talk about Elmer and all the things he did that day to disrupt the classroom.

Elmer and Tyler have a younger sister, Lizzy, who is in your class. You're fond of Lizzy and think she's doing well in school. Ms. Carlson keeps asking you about Lizzy, but you're concerned about both her openness in talking about Elmer and Tyler as well as her questions about Lizzy. You tell her that Lizzy's doing just fine, but she doesn't seem to believe you.

Scenario adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Summary

This chapter touched on some of the many and varied roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals working with students in transition. It's important to continue thinking about the many ways that your participation can be helpful to your students' transition teams.

As a paraprofessional and service provider, you should be aware of your ethical responsibilities to your students and their families. Confidentiality is often one of your most important responsibilities. As you move forward, it will be useful to continue thinking about confidentiality in terms of its importance, the extent to which your students are entitled to it, and its limits.

Questions to Ponder

- As an individual working in a school or community service agency, what is your role regarding confidentiality?
- What resources should you access if you question your role in a confidential situation?

4

Chapter Four

Communication & Problem Solving

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Introduction

Whether or not paraprofessionals are actively participating in a student's IEP meetings, they're always an important part of the transition planning team. Because they work closely with students and professionals in a variety of settings — regular and special education classrooms, work sites, community agencies, and students' homes — paraprofessionals provide a critical "communications link" among the various individuals in a student's life.

Paraprofessionals are sometimes confronted with problems that involve conflict or disagreement with others. Using good communication skills can often prevent problems from arising. However, when problems do arise, it's sometimes helpful to have some formalized techniques available to guide yourself to a reasonable and effective solution.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Become familiar with what it means to have an assertive communication style as opposed to a passive or aggressive communication style.
- Develop an awareness of your own social skills and communication style.
- Become familiar with some of the elements that foster clear communication between teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Become familiar with a formalized problem-solving technique.
- Begin utilizing problem-solving techniques in approaching real-life situations.

Section 1

Effective Communication

While out in the community, paraprofessionals are the "frontline" representatives of the school as they work with students on developing employment and independent living skills (Pickett, 1993). Having such a visible job requires that they learn and practice the skills necessary to be effective communicators. The following are examples of three commonly used communication styles:

Passive Communication

- **Definition:** Allowing others to treat you, your thoughts and feelings in whatever way they want, without your expression.
- **Characteristics:** Avoiding problems, letting others take advantage of you, becoming angry.
- **Results:** Feeling powerless, wasting time.

Aggressive Communication

- **Definition:** Standing up for what you want, regardless of the rights and feelings of others.
- **Characteristics:** Attacking people rather than problems, letting anger get out of control, demanding not requesting.
- **Results:** Temporary satisfaction, offending others, fear and avoidance by other people.

Assertive Communication

- **Definition:** Standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts feeling and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways which respect the rights of other people.
- **Characteristics:** Focusing on the problem, establishing good working relationships, dealing appropriately with anger, expressing feelings.
- **Results:** Solving problems, receiving respect from others, feeling good about yourself.

Adapted with permission from PACER Center, Inc. (1988). *Students in transition using planning: Teacher's manual,* pp. 67-68. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

Paraprofessional Communication & Social Skills Inventory

This isn't a test: this is a tool you can use to rate your ability to communicate/interact with coworkers, students, parents, and other people you come into contact with on the job. It's designed to help you assess your social skills, your ability to express your feelings, and to help you identify skills you would like to improve. Circle the number to the right of each item that best describes how well you use a specific skill. When you have completed the inventory, review the various skills and think about those you feel are important to the way you perform your job. Choose three that you would like to improve and make a list of ways you can change these behaviors.

1 = *Very poorly*
2 = *Not very well*
3 = *Average*
4 = *Very well*
5 = *Extremely well*

1	Active listening	1	2	3	4	5
2	Starting a conversation	1	2	3	4	5
3	Asking for a favor	1	2	3	4	5
4	Giving a compliment	1	2	3	4	5
5	Accepting a compliment	1	2	3	4	5
6	Accepting criticism	1	2	3	4	5

7	Giving criticism	1	2	3	4	5
8	Apologizing	1	2	3	4	5
9	Giving instructions	1	2	3	4	5
10	Following instructions	1	2	3	4	5
11	Expressing your feelings	1	2	3	4	5
12	Handling anger	1	2	3	4	5
13	Dealing with conflict	1	2	3	4	5
14	Problem solving	1	2	3	4	5
15	Standing up for your rights	1	2	3	4	5
16	Stating what you want	1	2	3	4	5
17	Stating an unpopular opinion	1	2	3	4	5
18	Saying "no"	1	2	3	4	5
19	Having a positive attitude	1	2	3	4	5
20	Asking questions	1	2	3	4	5
21	Completing tasks	1	2	3	4	5
22	Dealing with resistance	1	2	3	4	5

Paraprofessional Communication & Social Skills Inventory adapted with permission from Thurston, L. (1993). *A teacher self-assessment inventory.* In Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Strategies for Communicating with Teachers

There are a number of elements that must be present in any situation to ensure clear channels of communication. Some are commonplace and things we take for granted. If the members of the team aren't careful and don't pay attention, positive communication can be inhibited. For example:

- The attitudes and feelings of both teachers and paraprofessionals need to be known, respected, and understood. They need to deal openly with their attitudes and feelings toward their roles and duties, their attitudes toward students with whom they work, their attitudes toward instructional styles and management, and their attitudes toward the value of the other person's contributions. When feelings aren't shared and openly communicated, the nature of the relationship won't grow and the team will be less effective.
- An understanding of the similarities and differences among the people involved in the team must be recognized and understood. They may include different points of view about educational strategies, different values, different cultural and reli-

gious heritage, different levels of education and experience, and other factors that can affect the working relationship.

- Teachers, paraprofessionals, and other education personnel should actively seek to develop and share a common vocabulary.
- Teachers must make sure that their directions and expectations are clearly understood and that paraprofessionals have the information and skills they require to perform their assigned tasks.
- Paraprofessionals must be willing to ask for clarification or assistance if an assignment isn't understood.
- Teachers should determine what special interests, talents, and training the paraprofessionals have that will complement and enhance their own skills and improve the delivery of education services to children and youth.
- The team must actively work to create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty by meeting regularly to discuss procedures and techniques that will establish and maintain open channels of communication.

Strategies for Communicating with Teachers adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L. (1990). *A training program for paraprofessionals working in special education and related services* (2nd ed.). New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Section 2
Solving Problems

Many times, because of the pressures of other duties, education teams may ignore or postpone dealing with a problem that involves disagreements or conflicts with adults with whom they work. This may often accentuate the differences among individuals involved in planning and implementing education and related services. It's necessary for the people involved to decide on a course of action. Finding mutually acceptable solutions isn't always easy, and the responsibility for developing effective procedures for alleviating problems are likely to be left to the teachers and paraprofessionals with little outside assistance or support.

A Problem-Solving Technique

The following are a series of steps that can be used by teachers and paraprofessionals to improve their ability to work together and with students, parents, and others. While this approach to problem solving is based on people working together to achieve consensus, there are often times when it's necessary for teachers and other supervisors to make decisions that paraprofessionals may not always fully appreciate. However, by maintaining open lines of communication and mutual trust, these problems should be few and far between.

Step One – Identify and Describe the Problem

A situation must be clearly understood if concerns and issues will lead to a satisfactory solution. Everyone involved in a situation or participating in planning efforts should describe the problem in their own words and from their own point of view. This may be done by asking and answering these questions: What is the problem? Who is involved? Who is affected? How are they affected?

Step Two – Define and Determine the Cause of the Problem

It isn't enough to identify the problem: it's essential to determine what has created the problem and what causes it to persist. For example, the problem may be caused by "outside conditions" (contractual agreements, a lack of financial resources) that an instructional team may have little ability to change, or it may have its roots in a lack of understanding of the distinction between the roles and duties of teachers and paraprofessionals. Other factors that can influence how a problem is defined may include differences in values and attitudes, age, work experience, education, cultural heritage, and/or religious beliefs. Still other concerns may be connected with the move to restructure education systems and procedures, efforts to provide education services in community and learning environments, and the need to involve parents and other caregivers in all aspects of their child's education. It's important that the real problem be separated from surface events and that areas of agreement and disagreement be identified.

Step Three – Decide on a Goal and Identify Alternative Solutions

Only once the problem has been identified can strategies be developed. The primary question that needs to be asked and answered is "what do we want to achieve and how can we go about achieving it?" By working together and brainstorming a list of alternative solutions to the problem, the team members will have several options that will enable them to choose a course of action with which they can all live. It will also enable them to determine what additional information, physical or human resources, skills or knowledge they will need to carry out the solution and whether or not these resources are essential to achieving the goal.

Step Four – Select and Implement a Course of Action

To make a decision about which course of action will be tried, the participants should decide which solution is most likely to get the desired results. Agreeing on a solution isn't enough. The participants must try it out and test it to see if it will work. They must also give it enough time to see if the solution will work since behaviors and new skills can't be changed overnight. The goal isn't necessarily to agree on a final course of action or agree on a point of view, but to find a common ground which everyone is willing to accept. Acceptance does not equal agreement.

Step Five – Evaluate the Results

Has the problem been resolved? Is there progress? If not, why? Should we try another one of the alternatives? Should we ask for assistance from other sources? All of these are questions that will need to be addressed in order to assess the effectiveness of the process.

Information in *A Problem Solving Technique* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L. (1990). *A training program for paraprofessionals working in special education and related services* (2nd ed.). New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Additional Problem-Solving Strategies

1 **Define:**

- The problem as one person sees it.
- The problem as the other person sees it.
- Develop a common or shared definition.

2 **Ask:**

- Who is involved?
- How are they involved?
- What behaviors or attitudes of the different individuals need to be changed?

3 **List:**

- Areas of mutual agreement concerning problems.
- Areas of disagreement.
- The barriers to finding a solution.

4 **Develop:**

- Desired goals.
- Solutions by brainstorming various ideas.
- A list of resources, information, or assistance that will help you achieve the goal.

5 **Implement:**

- The solution for a specific time period and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.
- If necessary, select and implement another alternative.

Problem-Solving Scenarios

During all phases of transitional and vocational training, paraprofessionals and the students with whom they work will come into contact with many people including employers, coworkers, clerks in stores, bus drivers, members of the general public, and representatives of human services agencies that provide forms of support and assistance. Review the following scenarios and develop one or more strategies you might use to prepare the student to cope with the situation. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the other members of the class.

1 You're training Jerry to recognize and follow traffic signals. A jaywalker crosses the street against the light and Jerry tries to cross with her. When you take Jerry's arm, he begins to yell at you and then refuses to cross when the light changes. What will you do?

2 John works for a catering company serving a major airline. You trained him to set up the meal trays for the coach class seats and faded your assistance several weeks ago. Yesterday the teacher received a call from John's supervisor. John had been transferred to doing the trays for the first class section which required him to fill small salt and pepper shakers and place them on each tray rather than wrap individual packets in a napkin. Filling the shakers was difficult for John – so he substituted the packets. The supervisor tried several ways to help John fill the shakers and do the job properly. Finally, John threw several shakers on the floor and stormed out. The supervisor says they need someone for the job who is flexible and can be assigned to different tasks at a moment's notice and John does not seem to be able to do this. What can you and the teacher do to assist John and the supervisor?

3 You're teaching Joanne to use an automatic teller machine (ATM). She keeps punching in the wrong access code and starts to pound on the machine when she does not receive the money. There are three or four people in line behind her. The bank manager approaches you, says Joanne is annoying the customers, and asks you to use another branch. What strategies would you use to assist Joanne and to help other people understand the situation?

Scenarios adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Summary

This chapter has given you a framework for evaluating your communication style and some strategies for communicating with teachers. The chapter also has presented some formalized approaches to solving problems that you may encounter as a paraprofessional. Problems can often be prevented by utilizing good communication skills. If problems do develop, it might be helpful to develop a solution using an approach like the ones presented in this chapter. Remember, one of the keys to many problem-solving strategies is to break the process into small, manageable steps and then to proceed in an organized fashion.

Questions to Ponder

- Can you think of a situation in your life when it might have been helpful to step back from a problem and employ a formalized problem-solving strategy? How would the solution have been different?
- Many of us find it difficult to look at our own communication styles objectively and nondefensively. What was it like to use the *Paraprofessional Communication & Social Skills Inventory* in this chapter to evaluate your own skills? Do you think you might respond to the items in the inventory differently depending on the situation or with whom you were communicating?
- Effective communication involves active participation from both people involved. Are you comfortable asking for clarification from a teacher or other team member when you don't understand what is being said?

5

Chapter Five

Assessment & Goal Setting

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27 Section 1 Assessment
29 Section 2 Observing & Recording Data
30 Section 3 Setting Transition Goals & Objectives
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Introduction

Before a transition team can set goals with a student, information about the student must be gathered and analyzed. The process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information related to the student is called *assessment.* As part of the assessment process, a paraprofessional may be called upon to observe the student as he or she interacts with the environment and learns new skills. In order to make full use of the observational data, objective and accurate records must be kept. Using the information from the observation and assessment, the transition team is better able to develop transition goals that are appropriate to the student's needs.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Become familiar with the different methods of assessment discussed in the chapter: standardized testing, behavioral checklists, and functional assessments.
- Understand what is meant by "objective observation."
- Report behaviors in a manner that is both observable and measurable.
- Be familiar with ways that observations are recorded.
- Understand the distinction between goals and objectives.
- Be familiar with developing objectives that include the three components of behavior, criteria, and conditions.

Section 1

Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting and interpreting information relating to a student with a disability. The purpose of assessment is to determine the student's present skill level. This provides a basis on which new learning experiences can be planned. Usually, before a student is assigned to a particular program or classroom, a thorough assessment has been carried out. This will have included a comprehensive look at the student's physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic development and a determination of his or her strengths in each area. Traditionally, teachers and other professional staff have been responsible for conducting some of the assessment activities. Paraprofessionals are often asked to help identify the student's functional capabilities by observing and recording information. It's important to remember that many times the people with the most relevant and important information are those who spend a large amount of time with the student. Parents, relatives, and peers can contribute valuable information which can also be considered assessment data. Direct conversations with and observations of the student can also yield valuable insights.

Three Ways to Carry Out Assessment

Assessment can be done in a variety of ways. Standardized testing and behavioral checklists are two types of assessment that require special instruments. Each of these is discussed below. However, observations of how students use specific skills to manage their environment are an important part of the assessment process as well.

Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are always given in the same way — using the same instructions and the same material — and scored using the same method every time, one which is based on the scoring of tests administered to a broad range of people, and for which an "average" score or a "norm" has been established.

Standardized tests compare how well an individual student performs a given task in comparison to the way in which many other students of the same age have performed the same task. In order for standardized tests to be useful and fair, the group of people to whom the individual is being compared must reflect the cultural and ethnic background of the student being evaluated. Each school may use its own battery of tests and assessment tools depending on what it finds most useful or valid. There is no consistency across all schools.

Behavioral Checklists

Behavioral checklists categorize specific behaviors, usually in developmental areas such as fine motor, cognitive, language, gross motor, etc. Usually, specific behaviors are also listed in the sequence in which they occur in a "typical" developmental pattern. The person using the checklist simply checks off whether or not the student is able to perform that specific type of behavior. The checklist can be helpful in formally evaluating specific skills in the classroom or other areas. They can also be used informally to indicate strengths and possible areas where assistance is needed.

Functional Assessment

While both standardized tests and behavioral checklists will probably remain an integral part of the assessment data that is gathered for each student with disabilities, the most important assessments are usually done informally and relate to the functional skills of the individual. Almost of us would have a difficult time if it were necessary for us to meet the criteria of a specific test battery in order to get on with our lives. For example, what if scuba diving, glider flying, bowling with an average score of 200, and mountain climbing were set as the criteria for any of us to go to our next life goal? This is a silly question, of course, but it has some relevance when one thinks of all the assessments that may be carried out on students with disabilities. With functional assessments, the student, the parent(s), a relative, or a friend often have the most valid information and their insights should be included. This can be done with informal surveys or checklists.

Information in *Three Ways to Carry Out Assessment* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Section 2

Observing & Recording Data

Acquiring and using objective skills of observation and data keeping are important to all education paraprofessionals, no matter whether they work as instructional assistants, transition trainers, or job coaches. Much of the information required to let the team know whether or not students are gaining new skills is acquired by careful observation and good record keeping. In addition, observation will keep the team posted on whether or not the students are learning and using the functional skills necessary to let them achieve the objectives and long-term goals that are outlined in the IEP or ITP.

Through observation, we can learn what the students can do, what they like or dislike, how they behave under various circumstances, and how they interact with people around them. There are two points to remember when making observations: a behavior must be both *observable* and *measurable.* In other words, we must be able to see or hear a behavior, and we must be able to count or time how often it occurs.

For example, an observation that says "Frank hit John on the arm twice within five minutes" fulfills both of these points. The observer saw Frank hit John and counted the hits as they happened. An observation that says "Annie was being her usual schizophrenic self this morning" fails both points. "Her usual schizophrenic self" really tells us nothing about Annie. It is, instead, a judgment call made by the observer and gives no information. It doesn't tell us what the observer saw and, since we don't have that information, there's nothing to count — and, therefore, we have nothing to build on when planning personalized instructional interventions.

Recording Your Observations

There are several ways to record your observations:

- **Checklists:** These may be in the form of standardized checklists which include specific skills and behaviors based on developmental levels, or a list of behaviors compiled by a teacher. When paraprofessionals work with a checklist, they simply watch the student and record whether or not she or he is doing the behavior described.
- **Anecdotal records:** These usually consist of a sentence or two written in a notebook that describe what the student is doing at a specific moment. When making an anecdotal record, only behaviors that can be seen or heard and behaviors that can be counted should be recorded.
- **Interviewing:** This is a specific kind of record keeping, one in which the team is trying to determine what the student likes or dislikes — his or her interests or other feelings or beliefs that can't be observed. When interviewing, it's extremely important to record precisely what the student says. There's no room for editorializing with this kind of record. Interviewing parents and caregivers is also very important.
- **Frequency or duration notes:** Sometimes, the information that is to be collected refers to how often or for how long a behavior is occurring. For example, the team may want to know how many times a student talked to or communicated with his or her playmates or how often a student initiated a conversation with coworkers. For this kind of record keeping, paraprofessionals will count the frequency of the behavior occurring and observe how long some behaviors last. For example, a transition facilitator might watch to see how long a student in supported employment works without supervision, or how well the student follows instruction.

Information in *Recording Your Observations* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Section 3

Setting Transition Goals & Objectives

When the individual, family, and education team develop an IEP together, there are key questions to ask that will enable the establishment of goals and objectives that will facilitate the student's integration and participation in community settings. The team should be sure that they can answer the questions before they start planning. The questions include:

- What are the student's ultimate goals?
- Will the skills that we propose to teach help this student to achieve his or her goals?
- Are the skills to be taught practical and functional? If the student does not learn a skill, will someone else need to perform the task for him or her or provide assistance?
- Will learning the skills enhance the life of the student and enable the student to enjoy life more?
- Although we may want to teach many skills, time is a factor. Which of those proposed are of highest priority for the student?

Appropriate Goals

Future Adult Goals

Future adult goals are statements that describe a student's future goals in the five transition areas:

- Home living.
- Leisure and recreation.
- Community participation.
- Postsecondary training and learning.
- Jobs and job training.

These goals are based on a student's interests and skills and are gradually more refined as a student nears graduation. They provide the direction for annual goals and objectives.

Annual Goals

Annual goals need to be stated in such a way that anyone who reads them knows exactly what is meant. For example, an annual goal for an adolescent may be "Juan will increase his stamina on his gardening job from five hours a week to twenty hours by May 1, 1997." The goal is clear and describes precisely where Juan wants to be in the future.

Objectives

Each goal carries a series of objectives to accomplish. Some of them may include skills that the student needs to learn in order to attain the goal. Some of them may be activities that staff or family need to carry out so that the individual may reach the goal. An example would be arranging transportation so that a student can physically get to the desired places. Instructional objectives are statements that generally have three components:

- The behavior or the description of the skill the student will be able to do when the instruction is complete.
- The criteria or description of how the behavior will be evaluated.
- The conditions or a description of how the activity will be taught.

Goals and objectives should be written in such a way that the student, first and foremost, understands them and comprehends what is expected.

Information in *Objectives* adapted with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

Examples of Transition Goals & Objectives

Community Involvement

- **Long-term goal:** I want to be able to vote, go shopping on my own, keep up my own health care, and join some community clubs or organizations as an adult. I also want to travel in my community on my own.
- **Annual goal:** I will increase my participation in extra curricular school activities from none to one per quarter by next June.
- **Objective:** Given a list of extra-curricular activities, I will pick one activity to get involved in each quarter and will make an appointment to talk to the activity advisor ahead of time to figure out if I want to get involved and to discuss accessibility and accommodations. I will pick an activity at least two weeks before the beginning of each quarter, as monitored by my IEP manager.

Employment

- **Long-term goal:** After having lots of jobs, I decided that I like and am best at working in an office with lots of people around.
- **Annual goal:** During this final school year, I will apply for and be hired in a clerical employment position where I will progress in independence from full-time support to a daily check by school support personnel with support from coworkers as needed.
- **Objective:** With the help of my DRS counselor, I will look for a job near my home. When I find a job I like, I will increase independence on the job from 100% support to a daily check by next June, as monitored by my work experience coordinator.

Home Living

- **Long-term goal:** Thomas will continue to live with his family for a while after completing high school at age 21. He enjoys having his own room; he also like the company of people who are quiet and caring. We can tell this by the way he smiles when he's in his room and around his family and friends. He gets agitated when he has to share a room at his respite provider's home, when he's in the hospital, or around loud people and strangers. A future living situation with a lot of people or noise wouldn't suit Thomas. At some point, Thomas' family hopes he can share a quiet house or apartment with another man who is caring and quiet. From past training, it appears Thomas will need continual support with personal and daily living activities throughout his adult life.
- **Annual goal:** Thomas will increase his skills in choosing and preparing snacks and simple meals from being able to select a food item when two items are set in front of him and preparing about five food items, to selecting a snack from the refrigerator or cupboard and preparing up to ten food items, including breakfast, snacks, and a bag lunch.
- **Objective:** Given a stocked refrigerator and cupboard, Thomas will select the snack of his choice after school on four out of five school days per week by the end of the school year as monitored by his mom and teachers.

Postsecondary Education and Training

- **Long-term goal:** I want to work in the law enforcement field, maybe as a dispatcher. I plan to go to a postsecondary school that has training in law enforcement.
- **Annual goal:** I will increase preparation activities for entry next fall into a postsecondary setting that offers a program in my interest area from having visited several postsecondary sites to completing an application and being accepted into an educational setting, finding financial aid, and setting up accommodations by graduation this spring.
- **Objective:** I will travel by city bus to the office of my State Services for the Blind counselor and meet with my counselor at least four times over the course of the school year for assistance in planning and funding my postsecondary education.

Information in *Examples of Transition Goals & Objectives* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

This chapter has introduced standardized testing, behavioral checklists, and functional assessments in order to familiarize you with some of the more popular and current assessment methods. The chapter has also stressed the importance of objective observation during the assessment process. The last part of our discussion of assessment focused on some of the ways that observations are recorded. We stressed the need to record observations in a way that is both observable and measurable.

The last part of the chapter emphasized the distinction between *goals* and *objectives*. Goals should be stated as precisely as possible. Objectives should be stated in ways that include a behavior component, a criteria component, and a condition component.

Questions to Ponder

- Remember that the records you keep are used to make decisions that impact on your students' lives. Can you imagine a situation in which two different observers might observe the same event but record and report the event very differently? Taking it one step further, can you imagine how different decisions might be made or different goals might be set depending on which records were used?
- What are some of the advantages of having goals and objectives that are very specific? Can you think of any disadvantages?
- Standardized tests are often criticized as an assessment tool because they aren't always very reliable (i.e., the student might score differently the next time the test is given.) What would you do if you saw a test result that you didn't think accurately reflected a student's performance, aptitude, ability, etc.?

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Chapter Six

Student & Family Involvement

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Introduction

Students must begin to be actively involved in their transition planning by age 14. Involvement means that, to the best of their abilities, students participate in and provide input into the development of their transition goals. It's the school's responsibility to encourage student involvement by planning activities designed to inform them of their options, show them the pros and cons of various courses of action, and teach them how to participate in the IEP meeting. Students must be encouraged to attend their IEP meeting and be provided with support to participate in those meetings (Wehman, 1992).

Self-determination concerns the attitudes and abilities that lead people to take charge of their lives. This includes the opportunity to exercise choice, effectively solve problems, and take control and responsibility for their actions. In the transition process, as in life, self-determination is enhanced through a collaboration between concerned parties: teachers, paraprofessionals, families, community representatives, and students.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Begin to build a set of strategies and resources that will help students to be involved in their own transition planning.
- Develop some insight into the types of activities that students might need to participate in to ensure their successful transition.
- Develop an awareness of the types of student/paraprofessional interaction that encourage self-determination.
- Develop or heighten your appreciation for the diversity of ways in which students experience a sense of family.
- Gain an understanding of the many roles that parents play in the transition of their sons and daughters.
- Find some ways that you can offer support to students and their families during transition planning and implementation.

Section 1

Student Involvement in Transition Planning

The Paraprofessional's Role

Because paraprofessionals work in one-on-one situations with students on a daily basis, they often develop very close relationships with them. Through highly individualized instruction, paraprofessionals are able to provide students with opportunities to gain new skills and hands-on experiences that would otherwise not be available to them. The most effective paraprofessionals allow and encourage students to work as independently as possible. This strategy prevents students from becoming overly dependent on them.

The longer students and paraprofessionals work together, the more likely students are to open up and disclose personal information. Because of this, paraprofessionals often find themselves "counseling" students on issues and problems that are unrelated to their work. While some personal talk is natural, extensive counseling should be left to the school professionals who are trained to deal with these complex matters. A good rule to follow is if personal conversations are getting in the way of accomplishing your work, then you should suggest that the student talk to a trained professional. (See Chapter 3 for more information.)

What Do Students Want & Need?

When young adults with disabilities were asked what they thought students should do to ensure a successful transition, they offered a variety of practical suggestions. These comments were taken from forums held throughout Minnesota and interviews with former students of the Minneapolis Public Schools:

- Work on transition planning with your IEP manager. Write down your goals, plans, and what you like.
- Learn good communication skills so you can tell people what you want.
- Learn about resources like SSI (Supplemental Security Income), DRS (Division of Rehabilitation Services), and social services, and get information on all available options.
- Take a more active role in meetings. Take more responsibility and ask more questions.
- Join groups that can help, like local advocacy groups, church groups, and community education classes. Get more work experience, especially by trying to work part-time for pay.
- Take classes in independent living. Learn how to cook, shop, budget, and how to recognize and count money.
- Find out how to access community resources, services, and emergency systems and how to get help filling out forms. Learn self-determination and advocacy skills and how to make decisions.
- Get a driver's license, if you can, or learn how to use other transportation systems.
- Be serious, do your homework, and budget your time. Learn to use a calendar to write down your assignments and to help you plan time to study. Tell your teachers you have a disability.
- List your strengths and challenges. Find out what you're good at and put extra effort into areas that you're best at. Then set

goals and go for them, but don't be disappointed if you can't do everything — no one can do it all.

- Learn about accommodations that will help you, like using a spell-checker, asking people to show you how to do things instead of expecting you to read it from a book, using note takers, asking for extended time for tests, asking for tutors, having books read to you and using taped textbooks, and having someone read and edit your papers before you turn them in. It will help you a lot if you learn what these accommodations are and how to ask for them before you leave high school.
- Visit schools, talk to some instructors, and sit in on some classes before you decide which school you want to attend.

Information in *What Do Students Want & Need?* adapted with permission from:

Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities (1994). *Minnesota speaks out.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Paraprofessional Strategies

How to Involve Students in Transition Planning

- Starting at age 14, always have the student attend his or her transition-planning meeting, regardless of whether you feel they will understand or participate fully.
- Include transition planning and related instruction in the school curriculum to assist students in learning why participation is essential.
- Assist the student in identifying goals and dreams prior to the planning meeting. Use a checklist, survey, or other informal tool to pinpoint priorities of the student.
- Direct as much of the plan development and questioning process to the student as possible.
- Have the student assume as much responsibility as possible in the before, during, and after stages of the planning process.
- Whenever possible, assign tasks identified on the transition plan to the student and offer to provide the necessary supports.
- Have the student make his or her own appointments, fill out forms, and call for information as often as possible.
- Avoid activities that increase learned helplessness. Assist students in developing as many independence skills as possible.
- Direct questions at the team meetings to the student and guide the meeting based on their responses. Don't try to avoid the student's concerns or speak as if the student wasn't there.
- Prepare the student ahead of time for what will happen at the meeting: how to participate, what is expected, etc.

Section 2

Self-Determination

The Paraprofessional's Role

All students, regardless of the severity of their disability, have the potential to learn. One of the capacities they can acquire is self-determination. Learning to take control of one's life is an ongoing process. While some students will acquire these skills informally, others may need specific instruction to facilitate the acquisition and use of those skills and attitudes necessary to take charge of their lives. In addition, students with disabilities need opportunities to exercise these skills within the school and community.

Paraprofessional Strategies

Encourage Self-Advocacy

Students who enhance their self-determination skills learn to assert their rights and clearly communicate their needs, becoming advocates for themselves in the process. Students themselves are in the best position to define their personal vision and advocate for the changes and supports they believe will make it a reality.

Increase Responsibility

When students exercise control over their lives, they learn to take responsibility for their actions. The best way to teach students about responsibility is to give them the opportunity to make choices and experience the outcomes of their decisions.

Enhance Motivation

When students have opportunities to set personal goals and make choices, they become partners in the learning process. This increases their motivation, directly enhancing the quality of learning within the classroom. Motivated students are likely to increase their participation in learning activities. In addition, difficult-to-reach students may become motivated to get involved when given opportunities to experience some control over their education.

Encourage Prosocial Behaviors

Inappropriate classroom behaviors often represent students' most effective means of exercising control over their environment. By teaching students to take charge of their lives and providing them daily opportunities to practice choice-making, self-control, and personal advocacy skills, we promote the development and use of prosocial means through which to exercise control within the classroom, school, and community.

Improve Self-Esteem

Exercising control over one's life leads to a feeling of positive self-worth and increased self-confidence. Promoting the self-determination of students has the potential to increase their belief that events are under their personal control. The feeling of being in charge is likely to lead to an enhanced sense of competence. When students increase their perception of control, they improve their focus, task persistence, motivation, and subsequent educational outcomes.

Enhance Inclusion

When we encourage students to take charge of their lives, we are assisting them in the process of becoming a fully included member of society. Self-determination skills directly enhance the capacity of students to live independently or semi-independently in the community, acquire and maintain employment, and develop a supportive circle of friends.

Promote Self-Awareness

Individuals can only truly be aware of their capacities and limits through a lifelong pursuit of challenge and through experiences of success and temporary misfortune. Students are often not given the opportunity to experience this process. Through first-hand discovery of their own capacities, students can understand, adjust to, and accept the challenges imposed by a disability. In addition, students can better appreciate and take advantage of their talents and strengths through this process.

Encourage a Positive Public Image

People with disabilities are often viewed in a negative light by the general public. Enhancing the capacity of students with disabilities to make mature, independent choices will facilitate a positive change in this image. Enhanced self-determination will promote a view of people with disabilities as members of society who are entitled to full rights as citizens and who are respected for their abilities and the contributions they make to the community.

Promote Independence

When students are encouraged to take charge of their lives, their independence is enhanced. Students who aren't given the opportunities to make these decisions learn to be dependent on others. Students who are taught to make their own choices and are given opportunities to apply these skills to their own lives learn to make mature, informed decisions.

Enhance Awareness of Rights

Promoting self-determination will enhance the acceptance and understanding of the basic human rights of all individuals, including those with disabilities. Moreover, it will provide a convenient forum to discuss topics which are often associated with the infringement of human rights, such as prejudice, stereotyping, and bias. These are valuable lessons not only for students with disabilities but for all people in society.

Create a Vision of the Future

All of us dream about our future. This basic right may be denied to people with disabilities. Their vision is often determined by others. Enhanced self-determination will facilitate a student's acquisition of the self-awareness, problem-solving, personal advocacy, and self-regulation skills necessary to create this vision for their future.

Enhance Personal Control

Beyond simply creating a vision for their future, self-determination skills enable students to actually realize this vision — on their terms. In doing so, they begin a direct and immediate enrichment of the quality of their lives, and also a cumulative enrichment over the long-term outcome of life. Students with refined self-determination skills enhance personal control over their lives.

Information in *Paraprofessional Strategies* adapted with permission from Abery, B., et. al., (1994). *Why educators support self-determination for students with disabilities.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

Section 3

Family Involvement

Families of students with disabilities must be encouraged to participate actively in their son's or daughter's transition planning. It's the responsibility of the school to see that one or both parents are present and involved in their child's IEP meeting. This often involves scheduling meetings at convenient times and places for parents and arranging for an interpreter for parents whose native language isn't English.

Educators should talk to students and their families about the goals and dreams they envision for their child once he or she leaves school. Do they see their child living independently, working in the community, or going on to a technical or community college? Outcomes in each of the five transition areas (employment, home living, community participation, recreation and leisure, and post-school training and education) need to be addressed with families long before their child is ready to leave school. Once these questions are answered, a transition plan can be developed with goals and services designed to meet the specific outcomes for the individual student (Wehman, 1992). Families should be able to choose the services they feel are appropriate rather than simply being satisfied with those already in place. An informal checklist or survey can be given to families ahead of time to help them pinpoint areas of interest or concern. The results can be used to guide discussion at the meeting.

What is a Family?

A definition:

> A family is two or more individuals who may or may not share blood ties or be related by marriage and who share similar values and attitudes. Adult members of this group take responsibility for the children living with them by providing for education, values training, clothing, and food. The individuals in the group see themselves as united in their goals and aspirations.

What is a Family? used with permission from Pickett, A.L., Faison, K., Formanek, J., & Woods, J. (1993). *A core curriculum and training program to prepare paraeducators to work in transitional services and supported employment programs.* New York: City University of New York, The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services.

What Families Want & Need

When Minnesota parents of high school students were asked about their opinions on transition services, they offered the following comments:

- Transition objectives should be included on IEPs.
- They need information about available options both in school and for the future.
- They want to feel free to ask questions and make suggestions. Their participation in transition planning is important.
- Students' likes and desires should be respected.
- Students should be taught to be self-advocates.
- Teachers should be helped to accept students who are making decisions for themselves.
- Teachers should be allowed and encouraged to get out into the community to develop options.
- Clearly defined plans for accessing services in adult environments should be developed.
- Teachers should receive incentives to learn more about transition; more training needs to be available.

Information in *What Families Want & Need* adapted with permission from:

Minnesota Department of Education. (1994). *Making the transition team work.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities (1994). *Minnesota speaks out.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Appreciating Family Diversity

Working in the schools means that you may be involved with students and families from many different countries, cultures, and economic backgrounds, as well as ability levels. The challenge to educators is to encourage each individual to enjoy his or her difference and to help each person participate fully in all activities (Pickett, 1993). Because paraprofessionals work so closely with students and their families, they must be especially sensitive to and respectful of the differences between themselves and the families with whom they work. The following example describes "differences" that may be seem subtle or invisible to a professional, but are actually very important to the individual:

> Clarence's teacher indicated that she had signed up his entire class to take cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction as part of the requirement of their health course. Clarence couldn't find a way to tell her that his family didn't believe in providing CPR to people who might be dying. They believe that no one should intervene when it's time to die.

Respect the Grief Cycle

Some families will experience grief when they begin to think about their son or daughter entering adulthood. This grief is often brought on by different types of fears that families may experience during the transition process. Understanding these fears will allow you to better support and work more effectively with these families.

Roles Parents Play in Transition Planning

Parents as Providers of Unique Information

Parents can provide valuable information on the student's personal traits, interests, aptitudes, and behaviors related to their future goals and objectives. Unfortunately, because parents often don't have confidence in their views about the student's abilities, they are often reluctant to tell professionals at IEP meetings and transition-planning meetings what they know about their children. Here are some tips to encourage parent involvement:

- Listen to parents and respond based on their needs and values.
- Provide information to parents to prepare them for their child's IEP meeting.
- Provide a survey or checklist that can be filled out ahead of time and can "speak for" the parent if he or she is reluctant to speak at the meeting.

Parents as Role Models

Parents can have a powerful impact on young people's perceptions of adult life. All too often, young people with disabilities are led to believe, by the way they are treated at school and at home, that it's normal for them to be dependent. Parents need to make a conscious effort to impress upon their children that they can and will have jobs and become independent. Helping young people with disabilities develop appropriate behaviors is related to promoting positive attitudes towards work.

Some tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Suggest that parents take their child to visit their workplace.
- Assist parents to identify jobs that students can do at home.
- Provide information on communication and social skills that parents can work on with their child at home.
- Provide advocacy and transition training so that parents feel comfortable and have a basic understanding of the transition planning process.

Parents as Case Managers

Plans for transition services aren't self-executing. Parents will need to carefully follow the implementation of transition plans and make sure that the good intentions of agreements and collaborative efforts between various agencies are fully met. The tasks of parents may be complicated by the fact that a young person's need for service may extend beyond his or her school years. Unlike a free appropriate public education which is guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there is no entitlement to services for young adults with disabilities. Likewise, there is no single agency responsible for providing services. Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Informing parents of legal rights under special education laws.
- Giving information on services offered by adult service agencies.
- Providing training on the transition-planning process.

Parents as Service Advocates

The full range of services needed for transition is not yet available in most communities. Some school districts still don't provide career and vocational education programs to students enrolled in special education programs. Not all communities have a full range of residential or employment options — including supported work — available for people with disabilities. Consequently, there will continue to be a need for parents and young people themselves to work with service providers, employers, and policy makers to increase the availability of residential and employment options. Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Providing information on parent advocacy and support groups.
- Inviting parents to participate in school and community transition-planning meetings and organizations.
- Hooking parents up with other parents who are willing to serve as mentors and provide support throughout the process.

Parents as Advocates for Career Education in School Programs

Career education makes children aware of the variety of different occupations that exists and promotes thinking of themselves in relation to different career options. This stage typically begins in the late elementary years and early junior high school. Both in school and at home, educators and parents need to stress the importance of work, the broad range of work and employment opportunities available, the relationship among different types of work (e.g., job ladders within a company, how workers in professions employ support staff in other occupations), and the personal and economic benefits derived from different types of work. Tips to encourage parent involvement are:

- Suggesting that parents take their child to visit their own work place.
- Encouraging parents to explore career options with their child using newspapers, magazines, television, and movies to stimulate discussion.
- Helping parents to meet and get to know local representatives.

Parents as Risk Takers

Parents are often ambivalent about their son or daughter becoming more independent. They may know that letting go is the best thing, but actually allowing a young person with a disability to take the risks that go with independence may be hard.

Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Emphasizing student strengths and abilities.
- Addressing parents' concerns about the services their child is receiving.
- Including parents in all areas of transition planning and validating their ideas, needs, and vision for their child.
- Focusing on the positive – what the student *can* do.
- Providing information on independent living options: public housing, etc.

Parents as Financial Planners

Quite often, parents and young people with disabilities are faced with a dilemma caused by the fact the eligibility requirements for financial assistance programs create disincentive for person with disabilities to go to work. A typical situation might involve choosing between accepting a minimum wage job with no medical benefits which would lead to the loss of eligibility for Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid, or being content to stay at home with a daily routine lacking in stimulation, opportunities for growth, and the satisfaction that work provides. Decisions of this type involve balancing the need for financial security and the desire for independence. Tips to encourage parent involvement include:

- Providing accurate information about eligibility requirements of government programs.
- Providing information regarding wills, trusts and guardianships.
- Providing information on all forms of financial aid: amounts, agencies, contact people, etc.

Information in *Roles Parents Play in Transition Planning* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education (1993). *Information for parents of high school students with disabilities on transition to adult life.* (pp. 24-26). St. Paul, MN: Author.

Helping Families Look to the Future: Personal Futures Planning

Personal futures planning is a strategy that is becoming widely used to assist people with and without disabilities in setting personal goals and establishing a vision of the future. The purpose of a personal futures planning session is to provide a process through which young people with disabilities and their families can ask questions and identify the student's capacities, values, and interests.

Personal futures planning occurs when a small group of people who are close to the student (e.g., family members, teachers, friends, neighbors) gather together to offer support while brainstorming and strategizing future goals for the student. This "circle of support" or "person-centered team" makes commitments to carry out actions designed to assist the student in meeting his or her future goals and visions.

The first objective of the personal futures planning process is to develop a profile of the student. This profile covers several areas of the individual's life including history and background, relationships, places in the community, transportation, choices, and preferences. The information obtained from the personal futures planning session serves as a good resource which can be referred back to and used as a guide throughout the student's transition-planning years (See Appendix D for a detailed description of the personal futures planning process).

Information in *Helping Families Look to the Future: Personal Futures Planning* adapted with permission from Abery, B., et. al., (1994). *Self-determination for youth with disabilities: A family education curriculum.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

Summary

This chapter has emphasized the importance of including the student and the student's family in the transition-planning process. We stressed the paraprofessional's role in executing strategies designed to involve students in their own planning process and for encouraging a sense of self-determination. The last part of the chapter was devoted to exploring the ways in which families are involved in the process. As part of our exploration, we looked at the many ways that students might experience a sense of family and at the many different roles that parents can play in transition planning.

Questions to Ponder

- As members of a teaching/helping profession, we often get a sense of satisfaction when we help others or make their lives easier. Can you think of a situation where your desire to help others has contributed to their "learned helplessness" rather than helping them gain a sense of independence? Can you think of any selfish reasons to encourage your students to remain dependent upon you?
- How do you think you will handle the situation when one of your students expresses a desire to make choices that are much different than the choices you would make in the same situation? At what point do you think it would be your responsibility to try to change the student's views?

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Chapter Seven

Employment

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Introduction

Preparing students to find meaningful and productive employment is one of the most important outcomes of the transition process. This isn't an easy job: it requires ongoing planning and must start early in the student's school career. Minnesota law requires that all students receiving special education services address employment in their Individualized Education Plans by age 14. These goals should be future-oriented and focus on career exploration activities and community work experiences (Wehman, 1992).

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand natural supports in the work environment.
- Become familiar with the concept of job coaching.
- Become familiar with career exploration and work experience options that may be available to your students.
- Begin to develop strategies to assist you in helping your students explore career options and develop and apply job skills.
- Understand the concept of job carving.
- List some of the characteristics that often determine the quality of a particular job for a person who has a disability.

Section 1

The Transition to Employment

The Paraprofessional's Role

Paraprofessionals' roles vary in the area of employment. They may work in the classroom with students as they learn job readiness skills or work one-on-one with students at a work site coaching them on the tasks required to complete a specific job. Job support and workplace training is often referred to as *job coaching*, and it is a common responsibility of paraprofessionals working with transition-aged students. The amount of job coaching necessary depends on the demands of the job as well as the student's skill level. Some students require constant support to complete a job, while others require only periodic visits from their job coach to see how things are going. Ideally, the job coach will gradually fade the amount of support given to the student. This occurs when students begin to learn the skills necessary to complete the tasks themselves. Coworkers and employers may also take on some of the responsibility of supporting students on the job.

Case Studies

As you read the following case studies, think about what is similar and different about the two situations. What might your role as a paraprofessional be in each situation?

Mary

Mary works part time as a mail sorter for a local bank. Her job coach, a paraprofessional named Susan, supports her as she does her job. To help Mary remember the steps of the job, Susan took photographs of Mary doing each task of the job. She then assembled them into a pocket-size photo album which Mary carries with her at work to help remind her of the tasks needed to be done. Using the photo album, Mary no longer needs to ask Susan what to do next. This has dramatically reduced the amount of support and time Susan needs to spend with Mary while greatly increasing Mary's independence and sense of self-esteem on the job.

While Mary was able to complete her mail sorting responsibilities without much support, Susan still had to be at the work site each day to remind Mary to punch her time card immediately before and after work. To solve this problem, Susan talked with Mary's employer who suggested that one of Mary's coworkers could easily help her remember to punch the time clock each day. A coworker with whom Mary works closely happily agreed to assist. By transferring responsibility from the job coach to a coworker, Mary is now working more independently and being supported naturally by her coworkers. Using natural supports, Susan is now able to spend less time with Mary and more time with other students who need her support.

John

John works as a stock person at a local department store. His job responsibilities involve returning merchandise to the shelves. To do this John must pick up the merchandise from the store's two fitting room attendants and from the customer service desk representative. Once John has retrieved the items, he must decide to which department the item belongs by reading the department number on each item's ticket. The last step is to take the item to its appropriate department and return it to the shelf that contains the same items.

John's job coach is currently providing full-time support to him on his job. This is largely because John has a hard time keeping all the items and their departments straight. The job coach also helps John organize the items by department so he doesn't have to make a separate trip for each item. As it stands, John wouldn't be able to do all the work required of him each day without the help of his job coach.

Available Career Exploration Options

The first step in the career exploration process is for students to begin to learn about themselves — what are their interests and needs? What type of jobs can they imagine performing as adults? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Will their disability affect them in their future jobs? These questions can be answered by:

- Talking informally with students and their families.
- Observing students in real-life work environments.
- Administering formal career exploration surveys.

After students have completed one or more career assessments, they can begin to explore some of the jobs and fields in which they are interested. A few examples of these types of career exploration activities are:

- **Job shadowing:** A student goes into a work site and "shadows" or follows an employee whose job is of interest to them.
- **Visits by professionals:** Individuals from a variety of fields come to the school to describe their jobs and answer students' questions.
- **School-based vocational classes:** Students learn general work related skills such as how to fill out an application, interviewing strategies, and social skills.
- **Reviewing job resources:** Students learn about potential jobs and businesses through resources such as the classified ads and the yellow pages.

Paraprofessional Strategies

Career Awareness and Exploration: How Can I Best Teach Career Awareness?

- Have the student organize career information into clusters that illustrate various jobs that interest him or her. Identify the amount of training required for each type of job.
- Have students list the generic safety rules of work settings and sites that may have specific standards (e.g., construction work, chemical plants, assembly lines, food service, etc.).
- Have students identify occupational opportunities within the local community by reading the want ads, talking to employers, etc. Invite employers in to discuss their particular job openings.
- Visit various work sites and have students log information about such aspects as duties, pay, benefits, environment, and coworkers of each work site.
- Administer checklists and surveys that help identify personal values and interests as they relate to the world of work.

- Help the student identify the interrelatedness of work and the value of all work to the welfare of society by discussing the workers they come across in any particular day (e.g., bus driver, teacher, store clerk).
- Help the student understand the important and changing contributions of people of color and individuals of diverse backgrounds to the world of work.
- Help the student to understand how an individual's personal traits are related to career choice and eventual occupational satisfaction by sharing (in small groups) three jobs they would like to do and three they wouldn't like and the reasons why.

Creating Career Exploration Experiences

- Role play a job interview and discuss ways to enhance one-on-one meetings with supervisors. Identify important aspects of a successful interview (i.e., looking nice, being on time, shaking hands, communicating clearly, etc.).
- Encourage parents or caregivers to actively participate in preparing the individual for an interview, job placement, or other community work activity by telling their child about their own job-hunting experiences.
- Complete a résumé and log all work experiences, their duration, employer's name and address, amount of pay, job duties, and comments. Update the résumé at the end of exploration activities.
- Help the student acquire occupational information relevant to his or her personal characteristics and career goals by using the Minnesota Career Information System, the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles,* and *Occupational Outlook.*
- Develop an occupational family tree and share it with other students. Discuss how each individual went about making their career choices.
- Have students role play skills needed for getting and keeping a job. Have them name three reasons an employer would hire them and three reasons that they could get dismissed from a job.
- Have students fill out sample job applications and prepare a date card to keep in their pocket when job hunting.
- Have students name three sources of job availability listings and use one to find job openings in a desired field.

Helping Students Develop and Apply Job Skills

- Help students sign up for vocational classes, set up necessary support, and meet with a vocational instructor to monitor program progress.
- Integrate academic instruction in areas of math, reading, and language arts as much as possible with the student's specific

types of vocational instruction. For example, if the student is in machine shop, teach the math skills for machine shop, obtain a list of vocabulary terms, and have student write a job order.

- Practice job-seeking skills such as applications, interviewing, and writing letters of inquiry in the classroom.
- Use instruction to emphasize improvement in work-related behaviors which should be integrated throughout the skill.
- Teach students access skills for utilizing support systems at their chosen postschool environment (i.e., make a list of questions to ask support people, develop a list of supports they may need, practice calling for appointments, have phone numbers readily available).
- Have students complete a self-evaluation each week while on a job and discuss examples of work skills and behaviors applied during the past week in a small group session with other students.

Information in *Paraprofessional Strategies* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1993). *Teaching the possibilities: Jobs and job training.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Available Work Experience Options

While some work-related skills (e.g., interviewing skills, filling out an application) can be learned in the classroom, the best way to gain a skill is by learning and practicing it on the job. Students should be exposed to a variety of community work experiences before they leave high school. Gaining experiences in multiple work environments gives students an idea of the types of jobs for which they're best suited and helps them make more informed career decisions. Seeing students in different work settings also helps professionals to develop the most appropriate ways to support an individual on the job (Wehman, 1992).

Choosing a job is a very personal decision. It must be made on an individual basis with as much input from the student as possible. It's the paraprofessional's job to provide options and to guide the student to the most appropriate job placement. Some students will prefer short-term, rotating jobs, while others will go directly into permanent, part-time supported employment positions. Levels of support will also vary from student to student. And in some cases, students will prefer not to work in the community. A few examples of these types of work experiences are:

- **Community job try-outs:** The student tries out a job of his/her choice for a predetermined amount of time (e.g., a few weeks).
- **Supported employment:** The student works at least 20 hours per week in a paid position in the community. Ongoing support is usually required throughout the duration of the employment.
- **Individual placement model:** Paid employment in which an employment specialist or job coach helps a person find a job

and trains that person to perform that job. Ongoing support is usually required throughout the duration of employment.

- **Mobile work crew:** A group of individuals work together to perform various types of service jobs in the community. This model is particularly helpful in areas where jobs are scarce. The cost of a job supervisor for the crew, as well as transportation to and from work sites, may be prohibitive.
- **Industrial enclave:** A small group of individuals with disabilities are assigned to work in a business with the assistance of a supervisor for training and support. This can be a cost efficient method because more than one person can work with the assistance of only one supervisor. Drawback: doesn't integrate, not easy to fade support.
- **Postsecondary job training:** Four-year universities, two-year community technical colleges, trade schools, military.
- **Competitive employment:** Professional, skilled, and semi-skilled paid work experiences.

How Jobs are Developed for Students with Disabilities

Developing jobs for students with disabilities is generally the responsibility of the school's work experience coordinator or vocational teacher. Once a job is developed though, it's the paraprofessional who goes into that environment and gets to know its employees and culture. Being part of the work site puts paraprofessionals in a natural position to assess potential work opportunities for students.

Creating Employment Opportunities

- Determine student needs and desires.
- Research target businesses, including personnel, training, retention, competition, and technical issues.
- Visit sample target businesses.
- Inventory activities of typical workers performing target tasks.
- Observe corporate culture, including rules and rituals.
- Task analyze duties and determine consumer capabilities, training, and assistance needs.
- Negotiate with employer.
- Teach and refine tasks.
- Build on typical supports and relationships.
- Fade.
- Maintain a consultative role.

How Jobs are Developed for Students with Disabilities adapted with permission from Wehman, P. (Ed.). (1996). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (2nd ed., p. 179). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624. For more information on job development, contact Cary Griffin, M.A., Director of Training, Rural Institute on Disabilities, 52 Corbin Hall, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.

Job Carving

One excellent technique for creating new jobs for students is through "job carving" (often referred to as "job developing"). This technique involves restructuring or reassigning a job so that students with disabilities can take responsibilities for some of the easier job tasks. Job carving benefits the employer by freeing up his or her higher paid employees to take on more high level responsibilities. Job carving is a way to increase productivity for employers and create new employment opportunities for students with disabilities (Wehman, 1992).

Job Carving at a Welder's Shop

Welder's inventory (nonsequential)	Carved tasks	Interactive & shared tasks
Clock-in	Yes	Yes
Drink coffee and talk	Yes	Yes
Get work orders	Yes	Yes
Design and trouble shoot	No	No
Weld	No	Maybe
Change welding tanks	Yes	Yes
Sort scraps	Yes	Maybe
Carry scraps to recycling	Yes	Sometimes
Clean work area	Yes	Yes
Clean facility	Yes	Maybe
Label stock and supplies	Yes	Yes
Check-in/stock deliveries	Yes	Yes
Talk with customers	No	Maybe
Lunch/breaks: talk and joke	Yes	Yes
Checkout; ride home	Yes	Yes

Job Carving adapted with permission from Wehman, P. (Ed.). (1996). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (2nd ed., p. 185). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624.

Possible Characteristics of a "Quality" Job

Less Desirable	*More Desirable*
Physical Space	
Employees are physically separated from coworkers by walls or barriers.	Workers are in proximity to coworkers without disabilities.
Interactions with Nondisabled Coworkers	
Employees have little or no interactions nondisabled coworkers.	The employee is in contact with nondisabled people at work.
Personnel Status	
Employees are legally employed by the organization.	Employees are legally employed by the support host company.

Pay	
Performing labor for no pay is prohibited by the U.S. Dept. of Labor (i.e., no volunteer work).	Wages may be minimum wage or above, or may be based on productivity when commensurate with wages received by nondisabled coworkers.
Benefits	
The employee receives no available worker benefits.	Benefits received are on parity with nondisabled coworkers.
Nature of Work	
Work is projected to be short-term or in an industry that is considered unstable.	Work is projected to be potentially long term and in a viable industry.
Number of Employees with Disabilities	
More than eight people with disabilities are grouped together.	People with disabilities represent approximately one percent of the total work force.
Worker Conditions	
Conditions are unsafe, unfriendly, inaccessible, or uncomfortable.	Conditions are safe, friendly, accessible, and comfortable.
Transportation	
Employees arrive via segregated bus for people with disabilities.	Employees arrive via car-pools with coworkers or by public transportation.
Work Routines (hours/days worked, break and lunch times)	
Routines are different from those of nondisabled workers.	Routines are same as those of coworkers.
Supervision	
Manager has low or no skills in training or supervising people with disabilities.	Supervisors understand relevant company procedures, have trained with people with disabilities.
Skills Acquired by the Worker	
Skills learned aren't marketable in local industry.	Acquired skills are marketable in local industry.
Enhancing Features (opportunities for increased responsibility, raises, status, upward mobility)	
Enhancing features aren't present.	Enhancing features are present.
Employer Agrees to Conditions Necessary for Employing Person with Severe Disabilities	
This condition isn't present.	This condition is present.

Support Organization

The support organization is highly visible within the host company or is a subcontractor.	The support organization maintains low visibility, but assists the company when requested to maintain and support employment (e.g. training other companies, providing behavior management consultation, screening potential employees, maintaining any documentation required by government.)

Possible Characteristics of a "Quality" Job adapted with permission from Wehman, P. (Ed.). (1992). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (p. 213). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624.

Summary

This chapter has illustrated many of the different ways paraprofessionals might be involved in the job planning and acquisition phase of a student's transition. Developing and utilizing natural supports was stressed as a way to help students gain independence. We have offered many strategies for paraprofessional participation in career awareness and exploration activities as well as strategies for helping students develop and apply job skills. We explored some of the most common work options that are currently available for students that have disabilities. The last part of the chapter discussed the concept of "job carving" and discussed some of the characteristics that might make up a quality job environment for students.

Questions to Ponder

- Thinking about careers, looking for work, and starting a new job are always placed at the top of published lists of "stressful life situations." Do you remember how you felt when you began to look for work as a paraprofessional? Do you remember your first day at your current job? What are some ways you can use your own experience to dissipate some of your students' anxiety about this aspect of their transition?
- To what extent was your own search for a job or career done in an organized and systematic way? Has any of the material in this chapter changed your views about how you might approach your next career or job hunt activity?

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Chapter Eight

Home Living

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Introduction

Transition planning must include goals and activities to prepare students for community living. Students need information on various types of living arrangements from which they can choose, as well as the types of skills necessary to function within these different home living options. The key to successful transition planning in this area is to match the student's independent living skills with his or her desired future living arrangement. This chapter highlights many of the issues paraprofessionals may need to become familiar with as they work with students. It's filled with strategies to help you support students as they learn home living skills.

As you will see, we have only begun to cover many of the important skills and tasks that you may be helping students learn. Entire courses are often devoted to "independent living" issues. We encourage you to seek out additional training if this is one of your interests or needs.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Develop an appreciation of the complexity and individual nature of a student's home living preferences and needs.
- Become familiar with some of the many home living options that may be available to students.
- Learn some strategies to assist you in supporting students as they learn home living skills.

Section 1

Choosing a Home Living Arrangement

The Paraprofessional's Role

Much the paraprofessional's work in this area will be carried out in community instructional settings. If a student hopes to share an apartment with a roommate after high school, he or she would probably benefit from learning certain skills in an actual apartment setting. Students who learn and practice domestic living skills in natural environments such as a personal residence or apartment are more likely to obtain and retain those skills than students who merely study about them in school.

When working with students, it's important to listen carefully to their needs and preferences regarding home living. All of us come from homes with unique traditions, values, and lifestyles. As educators, we need to be sensitive to these differences and respect them.

Involving families in developing and working on home living goals will help ensure their personal needs will be honored.

There are many areas that should be considered when assessing the needs of students in the area of home living. Some of these areas include:

- Housing alternatives
- Meal planning
- Housekeeping
- Safety
- Personal care
- Personal development

Available Home Living Options

Brief descriptions of living alternatives frequently available to people with disabilities are listed below. In some instances, it may be necessary to acquire additional training in one type of living situation before moving on into a more desired situation. If this is the case, it's very important for the person (and all those involved with the planning) to realize the training is a necessary step.

At Home with Natural or Foster Parents

For many young adults, living at home with their natural or foster parents is a viable option. The arrangement might very well be a healthy one for both parties. If the parents expect the (older) child to be as independent as possible, share in the responsibilities of running the household, and allow freedom of expression and identity in his or her space, it could be a satisfactory and rewarding experience. However, a critical issue surrounds whether the person has either made the decision to continue to live at home or has at least been actively involved in the decision process.

Foster Care

Foster care is another housing option that utilizes existing family structures: an individual with disabilities lives within the home of non-relatives (in most cases) and becomes part of this family. Adult foster care has become increasingly popular within the realm of community-based services, and systems have been established to financially support these service providers.

Rehabilitation Facilities

A rehabilitation facility is a temporary living alternative designed to assist people with physical disabilities (primarily) to develop the skills necessary to increase their independence. Rehabilitation facilities are mainly designed to serve those who are newly injured with the focus on regaining skills through physical and occupational therapy. A person may sometimes reach preinjury capabilities, but often the person learns an alternative method of performing a specific task. A simple piece of adaptive equipment is often all that is needed to assist the person in functioning more independently.

Supervised Living Environments

A continuum of housing alternatives exists to provide supervision and support to individuals with disabilities. These services are categorized according to the funding source and, in some cases, two programs may appear similar but are classified differently. Applicants to programs must be aware of the discreet differences so that they will know which services they are qualified to receive. Access to these living arrangements is coordinated by county case managers on an individualized basis; however, rising demands for alternative housing programs for individuals with disabilities have so severely depleted many community and county fiscal resources that long waiting lists are now the norm. Anyone considering a move into any of these environments needs a county case manager to provide guidance through the application process.

Intermediate Care Facilities – Mental Retardation (ICF/MR)

These facilities have traditionally been large residential programs serving residents from across wide geographic areas. The programs evolved from the old state hospital system with the large, segregated campuses being renamed regional treatment centers. While the role of these centers (and other institution-like residential programs) has been rapidly changing, large multi-bed facilities are no longer seen as a viable housing option for the vast majority of people with disabilities. Most counties will now only fund new ICF-MR programs with six beds or less to discourage "warehousing" of residents.

Waivered Services

To facilitate the movement from large institution-like facilities to community-based settings, the Minnesota Department of Human Services established an avenue of financial assistance known as waivered services. A variety of residential programs qualify for this funding, ranging from group homes to supervised living services (SLS — typically designed for apartment living). Counties contract with service providers to meet the individual's needs as they are identified within a plan developed by his or her team. The focus of each housing option is on skill development and independence enhancement.

Semi-Independent Living Situations (SILS)

Assistance can also be provided to people with disabilities through semi-independent living situations (SILS). Individualized plans of support are developed and skills necessary for independent living are taught in a variety of settings. An initial program may be located in a group living environment, where all the residents share home management responsibilities. As a person progresses, he or she may move into an apartment and continue to receive support services in targeted skill areas. As independence increases, structured assistance programs decrease. Eventually, the individual comes to rely on naturally occurring systems of supports within the community.

Living With a Roommate or Partner

Living with one or two people results in sharing not only space, but also expenses and responsibilities. The division of these tasks is decided cooperatively by those living together. Roommates have to respect each other's private areas, agree on house rules, and follow through on household responsibilities. The same expectations hold for partners or spouses, yet they are often tempered by the emotional aspects of relationships.

Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is an individual hired to assist with personal needs. Often, the PCA also performs such chores as housekeeping and personal care. In cases where the PCA lives with the employer, the decision must be made whether the living arrangements are considered to be the PCA's home or place of employment. If the PCA considers the arrangements as home, he or she should receive the space and respect given to a roommate or spouse.

Living Alone

Living alone in a house or apartment has many advantages and disadvantages. Such housing provides complete privacy and total freedom to do as one pleases, yet it also means that all the responsibilities for both self-care and home management rest with the individual. Even with a PCA or other contracted assistance, the individual still has total control of the activities within the home environment. Living alone can be an exciting goal for those accustomed to sharing all aspects of their daily lives.

Public Housing

Public housing allows a person with a disability who makes approximately $500 or less per month to obtain an apartment at a lower than standard rate. Rents are about one-third of monthly income. Each county has a public housing authority and an application procedure which needs to be followed. After applying, the person will be put on a waiting list and be contacted when their name is at the top of the list and there's an opening in one of the public housing units for that county. When this occurs, the applicant must accept or refuse the first opening made available. Applicants aren't allowed to choose which public housing unit in which they will live.

Section 8 Housing

Like public housing, Section 8 housing allows a person with a disability who makes approximately $500 or less per month to obtain an apartment at a lower than standard rate. Applicants may go to the county housing authority office to see a listing of apartments that are Section 8 providers. When an individual chooses which housing units they are interested in, they then go to those units and fill out the application for a Section 8 apartment. Section 8 allows individuals to choose the building they want to live in. Unfortunately, waiting lists at each complex are usually long — anywhere from one to six years.

It's advisable to apply for both public housing and Section 8. A person may get a public housing apartment and continue to stay on the waiting list for Section 8 until an opening is available.

Section 2

Supporting Students as They Learn Home Living Skills

There are many different strategies to assist students as they learn home living skills. Because home living is a highly personal area, it's a good idea to solicit the input of parents when deciding on instructional strategies. Families are in the best position to know about their children's strengths in this area and to support them as they develop new skills within the context of their daily family life.

The following are some teaching tips to get you started as you work with students and their families in the area of home living.

Choosing a Place to Live

- Compile a collection of pictures of class members' homes.
- Discuss the elements that make a house a home (i.e., personal belongings, plants, private space, etc.).
- Discuss where students see themselves living in one year and in five years. With whom do they live? What type of dwelling is it? How can they work to achieve these goals?
- Locate such local services or landmarks as bus routes, malls, grocery stores, and medical centers on a map and discuss neighboring/accessible residential areas.
- Invite a landlord to discuss leases, damage deposits, eviction, giving notice prior to moving, and qualities of a good renter.
- Compile a listing of average rents for various-sized apartments

by locations and discuss them.

- Organize a resource list of materials used when looking for a place to live — newspapers, apartment guides, magazines, etc.
- Invite a housing expert from a real estate agency to present information on mortgages, interest rates, application processes, the advantages of renting vs. owning, etc.
- Visit various types of housing facilities and help individuals visualize themselves in those settings.
- Present housing alternatives through a panel of adult residential service providers for parents, young adults with disabilities, and staff.
- Put together a slide or video show of different housing programs located within the local neighborhoods.
- Explore the possibility of having an existing apartment or house adapted with equipment and/or barrier-free modifications so that a specialized living arrangement can be avoided. Contact county housing officials and advocacy groups for information.
- Encourage students (and/or advocates) to address these questions about their home living choices:
  - Did you choose this home and this community? Do you have tenure in your house (a signed lease, ownership, or as a member of the family)? Is the house close to places and activities that attract you? Are the people with whom you share the house people you chose or would choose to live with? Do you feel safe, secure, and comfortable?
  - Are the people with whom you live (family, individuals, or care staff) supported enough so that they will choose to continue to live with you?
  - Are you receiving the personal support you require to live as independently as possible?
  - Is the house near other houses where people live?
  - Is the house a place where friends and family can come to talk privately if need be?

Meals & Nutrition

Meal Planning

- Collect nutritional information from popular fast food restaurants. Discuss the information and make a list of the "healthiest" items from each place. Save this information for comparison with other food items.
- Identify the major food groups and use the groups to plan balanced meals.

- Let individuals look through cookbooks and choose items they would like to cook. Make a grocery list of the ingredients needed, discuss the cost of the item, decide if it's a practical item to prepare (whether it meets the diners' needs, the time it will take to prepare and cook, whether it will serve the number of diners, etc.), determine a sequence of steps to take to follow the recipe, etc.

Purchasing Groceries

- Clip and organize coupons for items commonly used in class cooking projects. Determine how much is saved from the grocery bill when eventually used.
- Check weekly mailers and newspapers for sales or specials. Discuss the relative value of the sale/special item (i.e., original price, whether it's really useful, where the store is located and how convenient it is, what could be substituted for the item — fresh or generic item, etc.).
- Develop exercises to encourage comparison shopping (i.e., price per ounce, buying in bulk quantities, name vs. generic brand, in-season vs. out-of-season, etc.).
- Compile a resource center of information about programs providing assistance to individuals and families unable to purchase groceries due to low income. Local agencies, such as food shelves, and government-related services, such as food stamps, should be discussed and application processes made clear.

Cooking a Meal

- Adapt materials and/or kitchen space to meet needs of individuals with disabilities. Contact manufacturers about acquiring adaptive equipment, design individualized items, consult with an occupational or physical therapist, and check catalogs of rehabilitative equipment.
- Utilize a wide range of appliances and find out what each individual has and uses at home.
- Experience outdoor cooking using a grill and/or camp stove.
- Introduce both individual and group cooking. Have each person plan and cook a breakfast, lunch, or snack for themselves. Encourage each member to be involved in the decision-making processes involved in planning a meal and help each member assume an appropriate preparation task.
- Review kitchen safety rules regularly and acquaint everyone with the location of the first aid kit, smoke alarm, and fire extinguisher.
- Compile a recipe box of individual favorites. Watch newspapers and magazines for recipes and cooking hints.

Storing Food

- Invite a food science or poison control professional in to talk about health hazards related to improper food storage.
- Discuss signs of food poisoning and ways to check food for spoilage.
- Review the different types of plastic bags and containers available for food storage purposes. Discuss ways to seal such items and match storage unit to different types of food.

Keeping a House

Housekeeping: What is It?

- Generate lists of the household chores:
  They currently do
  They don't enjoy doing
  They rely on others to do
  They enjoy doing
- Generate lists of daily housekeeping tasks and discretionary tasks. Discuss and identify areas of personal interpretation. Combine and compare the lists and use as a starting point for discussing needs for support.
- Discuss tolerable levels of disorderliness and uncleanliness.
- Introduce basic skills in housekeeping tasks as directed in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Identify cleaning supplies and organize by purpose (i.e., abrasive cleansers, all-purpose spray cleaners, window cleaners, etc.).
- Explore the costs of contracting to have housekeeping done by private agencies or individuals. Discuss the situations that would make such services worthwhile options (i.e., extended illness, lack of support systems within independent living arrangement, long work hours/little leisure time, group decision to co-pay for service within group living situation, etc.).
- Role play confronting a roommate about his or her level of cleanliness and participation in maintenance responsibilities.

Home Maintenance and Repair

- Keep a list of the telephone numbers of building maintenance personnel and/or management staff near the phone.
- Generate a list of tools needed in a home repair kit and have students put together a kit.
- Using the yellow pages and/or personal referrals, develop a resource listing of repair services, organized by area of expertise (i.e., plumbing, electrical, appliance repair, etc.). Call the services and determine:

  - Their hourly rate
  - Their experience and years in business
  - Whether they are insured, bonded, and licensed
  - Their area of business
  - Their promptness/response rate to a call
- Prior to moving, arrange for an independent inspection of the house through a housing agency or private inspection company.
- Encourage parents to include their son or daughter in repair and maintenance activities around their home. Involvement should be based on participation level most suited to the individual's capabilities.

Decorating a House

- Discuss various decorating ideas using home living magazines.
- Identify and list items needed for each room of a house (i.e., bedroom furniture, kitchen furniture, dishes, pots and pans, silverware, linens and supplies, living room furniture, bathroom towels, etc.).
- Introduce inexpensive decorating ideas and resources for less costly furniture and decor items (i.e., making own curtains, checking furniture warehouse sales and outlets, starting plants from friends' plants, etc.).
- List home decorating safety issues such as not overloading electrical circuits, using decorative candles with supervision, and keeping extension cords out of traffic areas.

Safety Issues

Keeping Yourself Safe

- Simulate strangers coming to the door and calling on the phone through role-playing activities. Identify the amount of information it's safe to disclose at such times.
- Practice asking maintenance people for identification before allowing them to enter.
- Integrate real-life situations into social skills training to help solve problems and determine the correct interpersonal response.
- Discuss abuse and exploitation in honest terms and present steps people can take to report such occurrences, as well as avoid them.
- Provide resources such as Adult/Child Protection contracts, advocacy groups, and support organizations, as well as police agencies.
- Discuss stranger and acquaintance rape. List ways to avoid or minimize dangerous and vulnerable situations.

- Assist individuals in obtaining a picture identification card (these are usually available through the state driver's licensing program) and urge them to carry it at all times. Discuss times when it should be shown (i.e., to a police officer when lost or when writing checks in payment for purchases).
- Tape the appropriate amount of money (coins) to the ID card's back to be used for an emergency telephone call.

Keeping Your Home Safe

- Encourage regular examination of home door and window locks, smoke alarms, spare flashlights, fire extinguishers, electrical extension cords, and circuit breakers to be sure they are in good working condition.
- Develop a checklist of home safety steps to use on a daily basis, monthly or bimonthly basis, and prior to vacations. Include such activities as checking door locks nightly, making sure the oven and stove are turned off after use, clearing sidewalks of ice, replacing smoke alarm batteries, stopping home delivery of mail and newspapers before trips, unplugging electrical appliances like refrigerators, televisions, VCRs, and computers when leaving for extended periods, and giving a neighbor or friend a number where you can be contacted in case of an emergency. This list can be presented in a number of ways: laminated for daily check-off and re-use, in pictorial form for nonreaders, or posted on bulletin boards. It should be individualized to address the particular needs of the person and their homes.
- Identify fire evacuation routes from the classroom, home, and workplace. Regularly review fire safety rules and ways to react when caught in a fire.
- Invite an electric company representative to class to discuss electrical safety and possible hazards within the home.
- Put together a box of candles, candle holders, and matches and keep in a centrally located spot in the home. Keep flashlights throughout the home.
- Discuss safety issues related to using ladders and stools, reaching for and lifting objects, and using common household tools.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers for utility companies near the phone (e.g., gas, electrical, water, furnace, and cable TV provider).
- Ask people to determine if their home's electrical service is on a fuse or circuit system. Invite an electrical maintenance person in to discuss the differences in systems and repair techniques for each.
- Discuss possible reasons for the high incidence of accidents occurring in the home and list some strategies for prevention.

Grooming & Hygiene

Keeping Yourself Clean

- Identify common personal care products and discuss their uses and purposes.
- Invite a health professional to speak on the consequences of poor hygiene.
- Encourage individuals to keep some emergency personal care products in their lockers (toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, deodorant, extra make-up, skin lotion, etc.) These can also be used during any grooming instruction.
- Teach personal care skills in an appropriate location to assure privacy and to encourage generalization across environments (i.e., tooth brushing should be done at a bathroom sink, not in a classroom).
- Access (regular) health classes and consult with health education specialists during program development.

Making Yourself Look Good

- Use magazines and have individuals discuss current fashion. Some may enjoy cutting out pictures and putting together a collage.
- Develop two imaginary, same-aged peers of the class; one takes care to look his or her best and one does not. Generate lists to describe their characteristics, noting the minimal effect money or status has on presenting a well-kept appearance. Describe the reactions of several key groups — employers, parents, friends, and teachers — to each of the imaginary figures.
- Invite a hair stylist into class to discuss hair care, simple and inexpensive hair fashions, and new styles for young men and women.
- Explore personal coloring enhancement using either a guide or consultant to determine the shades which compliment each individual's skin tones and hair color.
- Discuss ways to pamper and boost personal care images — having a manicure, getting a new haircut or style, going to a tanning salon, visiting a salon for a facial or doing one at home.

Choosing Clothes and Shoes

- Substitute Velcro for buttons.
- Attach string to zippers.
- Replace shoestrings with elastic or purchase shoes with Velcro closures.
- Avoid wide legs or sleeves which may get caught in wheelchairs.
- Wear tops made of non-pulling fabric if using crutches.

- Consider pleats and raglan sleeves for greater movement.
- Remember that woven fabrics slide over braces easier than knits.
- Discuss the different types of clothes appropriate for different activities — parties, school, work, dances, recreation programs, church, etc. Pair up the activities and outfits. Some pairs will be very different (i.e., church and parties) while some may be quite similar (i.e., recreation and school).
- List jobs that have dress codes and define what would be included in each situation. Discuss why certain occupations have specific restrictions on worker apparel.
- Encourage individuals to keep a card with their clothing and shoe sizes in their wallets to assist with shopping.
- Using magazines of current fashion, ask young people to examine current trends and styles. Discuss the longevity of some styles and others that may be short-lived. Stress the importance of evaluating clothing and shoe purchases in relation to how long it may or may not be in style and identify ways to make stylish and economical purchases.
- Identify seasonal clothes factors and discuss dressing for the weather. List items of clothing appropriate for more than one season and ways to extend wardrobes (i.e., layering, color coordination, multi-purpose shoes, etc.).
- Discuss trying on clothes at a store, including proper manners (closing curtain, putting items back on hanger, taking care not to soil item, etc.)
- Encourage individuals to save their receipts after making a purchase in case a return is necessary.
- Identify the location of care instructions on garments being worn by the individuals. Discuss what the instructions mean and the implications in regard to cost and ease of care.
- Access (regular) consumer homemaking classes for training in sewing and creating clothes.
- Demonstrate correct usage of washers and dryers, including commercial machines (i.e., coin-operated).
- Demonstrate safe usage of irons.
- Identify the use of various washing products — fabric softener, bleach, detergent (powder and liquid), dryer sheets, starch, stain remover, etc.

Personal Development

- Identify what it's like to be growing up. Encourage individuals to reminisce about what they were like when younger, what types of things were important to them, and how they interacted with others. Have them compare those behaviors and values to what they do and feel now, and how current perceptions may change through the years ahead.

- Develop methods so that everyone can express basic needs and wants (verbal, written, pictorial, sign, etc.).
- Consult with parents or caregivers to ascertain what type of information they would like to have addressed in the area of personal development. A questionnaire or survey might get general information that can be followed up with personal conversation and discussion.

What Influences Personal Development?

- List ways society influences the behavior of young people. Highlight subtle messages given through media presentations of idealized youth.
- Identify positive and negative images that may be pushed upon young people be external forces (e.g., being thin, smoking, drinking, doing drugs, wearing the "right" clothes, staying in school, etc.). Distinguish steps young people can take to assert control over these messages and their influences.
- Examine the roles parents play in the lives of young people with disabilities. Have them develop a composite of each parent/caregiver, including what the person does or does not do on their behalf.
- Encourage hostility-free discussions of ways they can more fully communicate with each other.

Interactions with Others

Stranger? Acquaintance? Friend? Loved One?

- Using people particular to each individual's life, have them label the people as "stranger," "acquaintance," friend," or "loved one." This may work more effectively with photographs of each person.
- Expand on the above classifications by asking for a description or demonstration of the interactions appropriate to that type of relationship.
- Role play making introductions and meeting new people.
- List ways people treat friends. Discuss how friendships form and how they sometimes end.
- Play charades using interaction behaviors such as "courteous," "rude," "friendly," "lonely," "polite," etc. Rules can be modified to allow words and interaction with another player.
- Identify places and ways to meet new people. Discuss the pros and cons of each opportunity and things to watch out for when with unfamiliar people (i.e., date or acquaintance rape).

- Introduce correct telephone usage and ways the phone can be used to establish and maintain friendships.
- Role play asking people to visit, go to a movie, play a game, etc.
- Discuss appropriate times to call friends.

What is Appropriate Social-Sexual Behavior?

- Ascertain what social-sexual topics the parents are comfortable with having the school address. If a curriculum is being developed, it may be helpful to establish a work group to discuss content area. The work group could include teachers, parents, administrators, students, and possibly a health educator or other professional with a background in human sexuality education.
- A needs assessment addressing topics of social-sexual education could be given to young adults with and without disabilities. Questions could focus on areas such as dating, birth control, disease information, relationship development, sexual orientation, and parenting. Respondents should indicate their age and sex, but no identifying information. Results could be analyzed to determine instructional emphasis.
- List sexually transmitted diseases, their cause, transmission, and long-term effects. Discuss ways to avoid transmission and what to do if signs of infection appear (i.e., symptoms, types of testing, and agencies providing testing).
- Identify qualities of "ideal" boyfriends or girlfriends. Discuss why these qualities are important and the ways two people complement each other.
- Provide general terms such as *romantic, attractive, boyfriend, girlfriend, steady relationship, intercourse, kissing, intimacy*, etc. List alternative, slang terms for the same words. Discuss the connotations and meanings of the slang terms.
- Invite a health professional in to discuss pregnancy, childbirth, and various forms of birth control.
- Designate behaviors as "public" or "private" and present pictures of various behaviors or interactions to be labeled.
- Discuss personal boundaries and how to recognize appropriate distances (i.e., personal space).
- Identify times when a friend was/is counted on for support.
- Role play assertive requests for items or privileges from parents, friends, caregivers, teachers, siblings, and service providers.

Summary

As a paraprofessional, you may play many roles in a student's transition to community living. Because one of your main roles may be as an information provider, it's important that you're aware of the community living options presented in this chapter. You may also find that you're an important source of both formal and informal support for students during this time. This chapter has presented a wealth of suggestions about how to provide that support. Students' decisions about where and how they will live may be the single biggest decision they are faced with at this stage of their lives. For this reason, it's particularly important that you listen carefully to students and respect their individual needs and preferences.

Questions to Ponder

- Students may be presented with many options for how and where to live. As an adult, do you think that a new living situation should provide a mostly comfortable experience or a mostly challenging experience? Will you be able to separate your preferences in this regard from the preferences of your students?
- After reading this chapter, you may have a new appreciation for the number of little decisions that you make and the number of activities that constitute a day in your life. How many of those activities would you consider "absolutely necessary" in order to live independently? Can you get that list small enough that you feel you could teach them all to a young adult?

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Chapter Nine

Postsecondary Education

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Introduction

To succeed in a postsecondary setting, students must learn to function without many of the supports they were used to receiving from their high school. To do this, they must begin to develop new skills that will foster the maturity and independence they'll need to survive as adult students. Acquisition of the skills described in this chapter — self-advocacy, understanding strengths and limitations, social interactions, self-monitoring, time management, study skills, and problem solving — will prove invaluable for students who decide to move into a formal education or training program after high school.

This chapter begins by offering a few strategies for paraprofessionals assisting students to acquire knowledge and skill in each of these areas. We will also explore some of the unique accommodations that students with disabilities may require to ensure their full participation in a postsecondary setting. Lastly, we will provide an overview of the postsecondary education and training options available to students as they leave a high school setting.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Acquire strategies in the areas of understanding strengths and limitations, self-advocacy, social interactions, self-monitoring, time management, study skills, and problem solving to assist students in preparation for postsecondary education.
- Recognize and be able to generate appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities entering postsecondary settings.
- Be familiar with common education and training options available to students after high school.

Section 1

Planning for Postsecondary Education & Training

When working with students who are planning for postsecondary education and training, it's especially important to give them as much freedom and responsibility as possible. The more opportunities students are given to self-advocate and attend to their own needs, the better off they'll be when they enter the postsecondary world. Paraprofessionals who work closely with students in this planning process should carefully prepare the student for what is involved and expected in various postsecondary education and training programs. The following are a few teaching tips to assist students make this important transition.

Paraprofessional Strategies in Planning for Postsecondary Education & Training

Understanding Strengths and Limitations and Learning Styles

- Help individual students generate a list of strengths and limitations. Discuss student characteristics as they pertain to success in postsecondary education and training settings.
- Discuss different learning styles with students and help them determine ways they learn best.
- Teach students about the common characteristics of a variety of disabilities. Invite former students with those disabilities to talk to students about their strengths and limitations in postsecondary education.

Finding Support in Areas of Limitation

- Identify available community resources and support organizations for people with specific limitations and disability issues. Help students collect this information and add it to their personal transition files.
- Help students organize a personal transition file that can be used in the postsecondary application process. Following is a list of possible areas to include:
    - **Personal information:** Name, address, telephone number, emergency contacts, pertinent medical information, description of disability, list of strengths and weaknesses, financial support, vulnerability issues.
    - **School information:** Program descriptions, a copy of the last Individual Education Plan (IEP) and IEP goal areas, progress reports, recent assessment results, learning styles, accommodations needed, special concerns, long-range goals, and documentation of the disability.
    - **Vocational information:** Work experiences, levels and types of support, special concerns, long-range goals.
    - **Residential information:** Type of living arrangement, level of independence, accommodations, special concerns, long-range goals.
    - **Recreational/leisure information:** Preferred activities, club memberships, identified community programs and sponsors, accommodations, special concerns, long-range goals.
    - **Transportation information:** Current mode of transportation, community accessibility issues, costs, accommodations, impact on long-range goals.
    - **Advocacy and support services:** Community support services and advocacy groups, current membership and participation, long-range goals.

Self-Advocacy

- Define and discuss *self-advocacy*. Ask each individual to describe an incident where self-advocacy was or could be needed.
- Define *assertive behavior, aggressive behavior,* and *passive behavior,* and ask students to give examples of each. Role play a situation three different ways, using each type of behavior as a response, and discuss the results of each. Mock situations can include such incidents as being denied a service due to a disability, working out an alternative test-taking system with an instructor, and discussing postsecondary plans with parents who have differing viewpoints.

Student Participation on IEP/Transition Planning Teams

- Discuss the importance of the IEP with students and describe their roles on the IEP/transition planning team. Stress the impact of team decisions and the need for students to attend and participate in these planning meetings.
- Prior to IEP/transition planning meetings, discuss aspects of the transition-planning process with students and help them gather information that they can present to team members. Implement a student-centered planning strategy, such as the I-PLAN (developed by A.K. Van Reusen and C.S. Bos and described in *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Summer, 1990). Encourage active involvement by students in all levels of planning and program implementation.
- Help students determine long-term goals and have them list what they think they might be doing in one, five, and ten years. Encourage them to be as descriptive and creative as possible, listing job titles, annual income, home location, marital status, and leisure activities. Then determine the types of education and support needed to reach these goals. Discuss this time line in relation to IEP/transition planning.

Student Self-Advocacy for Their Rights as Citizens

- Inform students of rehabilitation and disability rights legislation. Discuss the impact of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Identify the personal responsibilities associated with these laws and ways to determine if a violation has occurred. Help students identify who to contact if their rights have been violated.
- Define and discuss *discrimination*. Identify ways that groups of people, especially those with disabilities, may be discriminated against. Ask students to talk about times that they have felt discriminated against.
- Role play an initial interview with admissions personnel at a postsecondary school. Identify the materials and types of infor-

mation that should be shared at this interview. Review questions that may be asked and appropriate responses. Also, generate questions that could be discriminatory and could violate an individual's civil rights. Discuss ways that interviewees can advocate for their rights in these situations. Develop guidelines on how to safeguard against discrimination while still disclosing the information needed to access specific programs, support, accommodations, and financial aid.

Student Advocacy for Accommodations in Postsecondary Settings

- Define *reasonable accommodations.* Help students identify accommodations they currently use and those that they will need to be successful as postsecondary students.
- Provide students with information on accommodations and support available in most postsecondary institutions. Role play ways to respond to situations where accommodations needed and requested are denied because of cost and inconvenience.

Social Interaction

How Do People Interact Nonverbally?

- Identify nonverbal modes of communication, such as eye contact, posture, and facial expression. Demonstrate ways to present a message, both positively and negatively, without speaking.
- Videotape students in role-playing situations where they need to convey a variety of messages and discuss the impact of nonverbal signals. Discuss ways these signals can bolster or impede communication.

What is Social Etiquette?

- Implement a systematic social skills program dealing with areas like manners, private and public behavior, and self-control.
- Develop a list of socially acceptable manners and when they can be used across a variety of settings and situations.

How Can Students Meet New People?

- Role play meeting new people in a class, at a party, or in the community. Teach students how to initiate conversations and relationships. Teach students how to request information using the phone and in person. Allow students to ask for information when it's needed.
- Identify characteristics of a good roommate and make a list of things to consider when choosing a roommate. Discuss concerns about sharing living space, strategies for dividing chores and expenses, and how to assure privacy.

Self-Monitoring

Monitoring Tasks and Goals

- After students have completed a task, ask them to rate their performance based on quality of work, accuracy, timeliness, etc. Compare teacher and student ratings and discuss areas of discrepancy.
- Encourage students to regularly review their own performance on several daily tasks.
- Periodically invite students to assess the progress they have made on their transition goals. Determine if new objectives and/or methods need to be considered.

Monitoring Your Own Behavior

- Help students reward themselves for a job well done. Then review the pitfalls and failures that are a part of one's life. Help students look beyond their failures.
- Discuss ineffective ways to self-monitor, such as constantly comparing oneself to others, setting unrealistic goals, and relying on others for all reinforcement.

Time Management

Managing Daily Activities

- Encourage students to wear a watch. For students who have difficulty telling time, a watch with an alarm function may be helpful. Discuss the importance of keeping track of time throughout the day.
- List daily responsibilities on a "to do" list.
- Help students coordinate a schedule for their entire day, including school, work, leisure and recreation activities, and home.
- Help students decide whether they are "morning" or "night" people and discuss the impact of energy on daily activities.

Prioritizing Tasks and Responsibilities

- Develop strategies for prioritizing tasks and responsibilities. List questions to ask when deciding which tasks should be completed first. Discuss ways to handle conflicting and overlapping activities.
- Help students combine activities that have common elements such as person or place.
- Identify common time wasters and ways to avoid them.

Managing Long-Term Time Commitments

- Teach students to keep a calendar of important deadlines, due dates, and other information. Use school and community calendars as examples.
- Help students plan a long-term project. Break the project down into a series of tasks, each with its own timeline. Mark timelines and progress on a calendar.
- Invite students to keep a daily diary for a month. Have them note what they did and how long each activity took. Evaluate and discuss.

Study Skills

Assessing Skills and Habits

- Discuss the importance of taking notes and outlining. Provide students with opportunities to develop these skills through their daily class work.
- Teach students to highlight the main ideas within texts and notes. Determine which methods work best for each student.
- Teach students to use such reference materials as a dictionary and thesaurus when studying. Identify study guides, glossaries, sample problems, and other study assistance within a textbook.
- Invite a student who is currently enrolled in a postsecondary school to discuss the differences between studying for high school and postsecondary courses. Ask the student to provide tips on how to prepare for postsecondary course demands.
- Discuss how different types of examinations require different types of preparation. For example, students study differently for multiple choice versus essay exams and for weekly quizzes versus a comprehensive final exam.

Getting Organized

- Encourage students to designate a spot in their home for studying. List the supplies needed for this space (for example, a light and a flat surface for writing). Discuss possible distractions in this study space.
- Make a list of school supplies needed in postsecondary settings.
- Ask each student to design a personal study plan, keeping in mind personal preferences for study conditions, times, and methods.

Learning About Study Groups

- Encourage the formation of study groups and discuss their advantages and disadvantages. Teach strategies these groups could use to maximize learning for all members.

- Pair students up with study partners in class. Have them compare notes, review materials, outline texts, and quiz each other.

Problem Solving

Some Strategies for Problem Solving

- Give students opportunities to practice stating problems clearly and concisely.
- Help students identify their personal priorities and things that they value. Teach them to use this list when solving a problem.
- Teach students to make a list of "pros" and "cons" to use when solving a problem. Practice this method on simple decisions such as deciding what to wear, and more complex problems such as choosing a postsecondary school.
- Role play situations that focus on specific problems students may face in postsecondary settings. Ask students to list possible solutions and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Examples may include missing the bus on the day of an exam, being asked to work late the night before a project is due, becoming ill and having to miss class, running out of money, and revising a class schedule when a desired course is unavailable.

Getting Help Solving Problems

- Define *peer pressure* and the influence it may have over problem-solving capability.
- Discuss current problems privately with individual students and help them arrive at a positive solution.
- Discuss harmful and ineffective ways to address problems like drinking and drug abuse, quitting or running away, eating disorders, withdrawal, vandalism, and other destructive behaviors.
- Help students develop a list of people, resources, and information that may help them make decisions and solve problems.
- Help students gather information about resources that can provide relief for stress such as exercise classes, health clubs, creative arts programs, support groups, crisis hotlines, relaxation training, and mental health services.

Accommodations for Students in Postsecondary Education & Training Settings

Students with disabilities often need postsecondary programs modified in order to be successful. In order to arrange program modifications, the postsecondary institutions require verification of a disability. Students diagnosed as having disabilities but no longer receiving special education services in high school are eligible for support and accommodations at the postsecondary level.

According to federal legislation, the right to reasonable accommodations is guaranteed for every individual with a disability. Specific accommodations should be identified while students are still in high school. Assistance can be gained from personnel at an office for students with disabilities at most postsecondary schools when making arrangements for accommodations with faculty for a specific course.

The office for students with disabilities is provided by the postsecondary institution to promote program and physical access which protects the rights of students with disabilities and assists the school with meeting its obligations under federal and state statutes. The office for students with disabilities works to provide or arrange accommodations to ensure access to programs and facilities, improve the understanding and support of the campus environment towards individuals with disabilities, and increase the enrollment and retention of students with disabilities. All of this is accomplished by providing students with disabilities access to the same learning opportunities as nondisabled students.

Three broad categories of adaptations that may be helpful to students are outlined below with some examples of accommodations that can be made:

Course Preparation

- Early registration
- Early syllabus
- Detailed syllabus
- Early text availability
- Classroom location
- Special seating arrangements

Skills Development

- Basic academic skills development
- Word processing
- Library assistance
- Help with writing papers
- Time management
- Stress management

Classroom Adaptations

- Interpreters
- PA system amplification (Telex, Phonic Ear)
- Taped lectures
- Note takers
- Lab aide, partner
- Alternate assignments, extended deadlines

- Taped textbooks
- Tutoring
- Adapted testing: time extensions, quiet space, reader/scribe, alternate format, taped exam, oral exam
- Calculator use in class
- Misspellings not penalized

Section 2

Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Disabilities

Each type of postsecondary education and training setting offers different programs and courses to meet a great variety of career goals. Potential postsecondary students should learn about programs in their interest area and types of services available to meet their needs. A careful review of the information collected about a student's strengths and limitations will also help students decide on whether a particular program is suited to their future goals.

This information may be gained from high school guidance counselors, vocational education teachers, work experience coordinators, or counselors from the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Postsecondary education and training institutions are obligated to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Each school has an affirmative action or 504 officer responsible for arranging accommodations. Many schools have specific offices for students with disabilities where supports are arranged and provided.

Technical Colleges

Technical colleges offer students opportunities to receive training in a specific occupational area with employment as the training goal. These programs are often reflective of an actual workplace with vocational skills and behaviors monitored closely (i.e., attendance, punctuality, self-improvement, attitudes, and independence). Programs vary in length from a few months to two years. Students who successfully complete a program may earn an Associate of Applied Science Degree or a specific certification or license, depending on their program. Programs may often be modified so that students with disabilities can obtain the skills needed for their desired career without officially completing an entire program.

Students who plan to attend a technical college should choose courses in their high school curriculum that apply to their career interests. Individuals may want to consider a program called "Two Plus Two." This program links the last two years of high school with the first two years of a postsecondary program. Another program that has evolved to facilitate the transition between high school and postsecondary education is called "Tech Prep." The premise of Tech Prep is that many secondary students aren't successful in typical academic high school programs. This program seeks to provide these individuals with a strong background in applied academics and basic vocational education while in high school. Then, a postsecondary program picks up where the high school program left off (without duplication) and offers competency-based training in a specific vocational area. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 has supplied grant money for several Tech Prep demonstration projects in Minnesota.

Community Colleges

Community colleges offer programs that culminate with either a certificate or Associate of Arts degree. These programs often provide liberal arts programs, giving students an opportunity to eventually complete a four-year degree at a college or university. They often have transfer agreements with state colleges and universities. Many community colleges now include vocational and occupational skills programs that lead directly to a job. They offer a variety of services for students with disabilities. Admission is open to anyone who has earned a high school diploma, holds a GED certificate, or whose class has graduated from high school. Some programs require additional qualifications or prerequisites because of specialized content, and some have enrollment limits.

College & Universities

Individuals who choose to attend a college or university usually intend to pursue a professional career. Potential students may have a specific career goal or just some ideas about the direction in which they would like to head. In either situation, it's important for potential students to review and evaluate several aspects of the colleges and universities that offer degrees in their interest areas. Colleges and universities offer several types of programs. Universities are usually quite large and offer undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Colleges are usually smaller and focus more on undergraduate training. Tuition varies greatly, with public institutions costing less due to tax revenue subsidies. Some schools are designed to meet the unique needs of a specific population. For example, Gallaudet University provides educational services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The University of Minnesota offers programs leading to associate, baccalaureate, graduate and professional degrees. Students are expected to have completed certain courses before entering the University. Individual colleges, schools, or institutes of the University specify grade and test score requirements for admission. There are several campuses throughout Minnesota, including Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and the Twin Cities, with a total of 53,000 full-time students.

State Colleges

Minnesota's state universities have seven campuses statewide, ranging in size from 3,000 to 16,000 students. Bachelor and master degree programs are available in over 100 subject areas.

Private Colleges

Private colleges have admissions standards that vary, and acceptance is based on some combination of performance in high school, scores from the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and/or the American College Testing Assessment (ACT), and often a written essay or letter of recommendation. Minnesota's private colleges enroll a diverse student body and 80 percent of the students currently receive financial aid.

A high school counselor or teacher who is familiar with college and university planning can be consulted to help individuals collect information about admission to a college or university. Once individuals have chosen the colleges or universities to which they want to apply, preparation for admission should begin. High school courses should emphasize academic and liberal arts areas. Some students with disabilities may need accommodations in these courses while in high school to maximize their level of participation and success.

While academics receive the primary focus during the admission process, high school extracurricular and community activities also receive consideration. Information about these activities should be included on applications and in interviews. Many postsecondary institutions offer scholarships and other forms of financial assistance for students who have demonstrated exceptional scholastic, creative, athletic, or leadership qualities.

Many colleges and universities require potential students to complete entrance examinations. These examinations are usually taken during high school and may require some preparation. Students may want to consider accessing books and workshops that describe the protocol and format of specific tests and provide information on effective test-taking techniques. Prearranged accommodations can be made for students with disabilities who register for the SAT and ACT with proof of disability and a verified need for accommodations. These accommodations may include increased time to take the test, having the test read or on tape, assistance with marking answers, and large print materials.

Other Postsecondary Education & Training Options

There are several education and training options available to individuals whose career goals don't fit within the confines of programs offered at colleges, technical colleges, or universities. Programs to explore include trade schools, community education, apprenticeship, military service, and vocational and habilitation programs. Students should be encouraged to collect information about several programs. Personal interviews and site visits are highly recommended.

For some people with disabilities, creative programs can be collectively designed with the assistance of their transition team and other family and community members. For example, a specialized vocational training program may be an appropriate choice for individuals who have chosen careers that require more focused, specialized training. These programs may include careers in cosmetology, business, electronics, sales, paralegal services, health care, and others. Many of these programs are offered through private schools that are accredited and licensed by the specific professional associations responsible for monitoring and training. Most of the instructors have direct experience in the field and can offer invaluable insight and advice, with on-the-job training available.

Information in *Other Postsecondary Education & Training Options* adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1992) *Teaching the possibilities: Postsecondary education and training.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

As we contemplate assisting students with disabilities in making the transition into a postsecondary environment, we can't help but develop a deeper understanding of how multifaceted this transition can be. The first step in planning for this transition is often an assessment of a student's skills and knowledge. The next step may be to provide appropriate training to foster the necessary maturity and independence for the student to thrive in his or her next setting.

Students entering postsecondary settings may require some accommodations in order to fully participate and succeed. Paraprofessionals can be an important source of assistance and support as students plan for desired accommodations and then self-advocate for their provision.

This chapter has highlighted some common issues associated with the "school-to-school" transition. As we have seen, there are many postsecondary options available for students with disabilities. As students consider their options and plan for the future, paraprofessionals can be instrumental in providing information, support, and assistance.

Questions to Ponder

- This chapter started by elaborating on six skill areas that are invaluable to students as they enter formal education or training after high school. Are these six skill areas unique requirements of postsecondary institutions? Can you think of ways that these skills help you and your students to grow and learn in other areas of life?
- Have you participated in any postsecondary education? Do you remember the feelings that you had as you began this new level of training? Looking back, what kinds of assistance and support would have made the transition easier for you?
- Spend some time thinking about the relative advantages and disadvantages of large vs. small postsecondary institutions. In general, larger institutions have a larger resource base to accommodate people with disabilities but can also be more socially overwhelming. Smaller schools might feel more personal and friendly for a student but be less willing or able to accommodate any special requirements. How can a student weigh these differences when making postsecondary education choices?

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Chapter Ten

Community Participation

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Introduction

To achieve independence as adults, students must be knowledgeable about the resources available in their communities and have the skills to access them. Students must identify their basic needs and then work to develop a "working knowledge" of the resources they will regularly need to live independently as adults.

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Begin to develop some strategies for teaching students how to access their community in the areas of transportation, financial planning, medical and dental care, and consumer awareness.

Section 1

Strategies for Fostering Community Participation

Most of the paraprofessional's work in this area will be carried out in the community. This often involves accompanying a student as he or she learns such skills as using an automatic teller machine, purchasing clothes or groceries, or riding the bus. All of these activities are time-consuming and often require that you practice them on many different occasions to be sure the student has truly mastered the task to the best of his or her ability.

Paraprofessionals should check their school's policy on transporting students off campus. Liability issues may prohibit you from using your own vehicle to drive to a community learning site. If possible, use public transportation for these types of activities. Using a mass transit system can be a wonderful learning experience in and of itself.

Transportation

Getting from one place to another can be very difficult for students with disabilities who don't drive. Learning about transportation options and how to use them is a crucial part learning to access one's community. Here are some tips for using public transportation:

- Assist students to learn bus routes using schedules and the bus company as resources.
- Ride the bus with students, walking them through the steps until they can do it themselves. Once you think they can do it on their own, follow along in your car as they take their first few rides alone.

- Assist students in asking for directions before they embark on a trip and also if they get lost.
- Role play a situation where the student gets lost. Identify appropriate people to ask for help.

Here are some tips for using private transportation:

- Explain how carpools can be arranged and used when you travel to and from the same area with other people. Brainstorm with students on where they could use carpooling in their lives.
- Explore options by calling or visiting companies and local organizations that provide transportation services such as local Arcs or paratransit services.
- List taxi services and phone numbers for students, including prices to and from their most common destinations.

Medical & Dental Care

Here are some tips for getting help for illness or injury:

- Encourage the carrying of an emergency medical information card at all times. These cards should include the person's address, telephone number, emergency contacts, doctor's/dentist's names and numbers, preferred hospital, blood type, insurance/medical assistance information (including number), allergies, existing medical conditions, and special considerations (i.e., uses sign language, wears leg brace, may become anxious, etc.).
- Develop an open enrollment program with the high school or Red Cross health/first aid instructor and integrate students into existing courses, with support, if necessary.
- List symptoms of illness that are valid excuses for staying home from school or work. For each symptom, give an example of the type of care needed to address it and draw attention to the symptoms that require the involvement of medical and dental professionals.
- Invite a community health nurse in to discuss infectious diseases and ways to minimize risk of exposure.
- Introduce common and serious diseases and distinguish between the levels of care available. Major diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and AIDS should receive comprehensive coverage, with local health professionals invited in to provide current information.
- Discuss medical insurance and the rising cost of care. Provide information about various options such as health maintenance organizations, Medicaid, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, etc.

- Encourage self-advocacy and assertive communication styles. Role play positive and negative doctor/patient interactions.
- Review emergency procedures (i.e., when to call 911).

Getting and Using Medications

- For people using medications daily, develop a chart to remind them of the times and dosages. This can be done pictorially and/or can accompany a medication administering box with each day's pills laid out in separate compartments (these can also be done for an entire week).
- Invite a pharmacist to speak about his or her role and responsibilities, the difference between over-the-counter and prescription drugs, cautions to take with medication, the emergence of generic drugs, and other topics.
- List the basic medications and first aid supplies to include in a home first aid kit. Describe the proper use of each item.
- Discuss medication expiration dates, dosage levels, special instructions (such as "take with milk," "take two hours after meal or four hours prior to meal," "take all medication unless instructed otherwise by physician," etc.), and warnings concerning mixing medication with alcohol, taking when pregnant or nursing, combining with other drugs, or using when under treatment for certain chronic health conditions (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, or heart disease).

Finding/Choosing a Doctor or Dentist

- Compile a resource center of information to assist people with disabilities in locating doctors and dentists in their area. Give contacts for referral services coordinated through hospitals, advocacy groups, or health maintenance organizations.
- Discuss the restrictions placed on choosing a doctor/dentist by various health insurance groups and the differences such groups may have in payment for services. Use actual forms needed to procure the payment.
- Provide information about mental health services and ways to access public and private service providers. Invite a clinical psychologist to discuss types of care (inpatient, outpatient, group therapy, individual therapy, etc.), and ways to access programs.

Making Health Care Appointments

- Role play making appointments for doctor and dentist visits. Remember to have medical record numbers handy for those people with health maintenance coverage.
- Identify the issues to address when visiting a doctor or dentist and rehearse expressing these concerns to medical personnel.
- Discuss the costs of medical and dental care and the importance of having insurance coverage.

- Explore ways medical coverage can be obtained, including having an insurance policy through an employer, carrying an individual policy, being included on a parent's policy, having medical assistance, and accessing community health services.

Receiving Financial Assistance for Medical Needs

- Medical Assistance (MA) is a state-funded program designed to alleviate medical costs for eligible recipients. The program pays for such things as medical office visits, prescriptions, glasses, hospital and nursing home care, therapies, hearing aids, and medical equipment. In addition, a person's MA monies are often used to cover supervised housing placements (i.e., licensed group homes) and to pay for a personal care assistant. Those Minnesota residents receiving Social Security benefits automatically qualify for MA funding. If they are currently ineligible for SSI, they may be able to receive MA later when they are 21 years old. If SSI checks are reduced or discontinued (commonly due to an increase in income), the recipients may be able to continue their MA coverage. (Income ceilings are higher for MA eligibility.) If a person's income is above eligibility levels, but monthly medical bills are high in relation to the income, the individual may qualify for a spend down. This allows for a sharing of medical costs, with the person paying for part of it and MA paying the rest. In addition, after SSI or SSDI cash benefits end, an individual can still be eligible for assistance if high medical expenses are common. Attendant care, prescriptions, and special equipment may qualify as work-related expenses.

Consumer Awareness

What Is Consumer Awareness?

- Choose several items and research their quality ratings through consumer magazines.
- Determine the best buy for the money and distinguish the factors leading to that decision.
- Develop exercises using mail order catalogs, having young people fill out the forms and figure additional costs, such as tax, postage, and handling.
- List quality indicators to look for when buying:
  - Clothes
  - Shoes
  - Electrical appliances
  - Furniture
  - Cars
  - Plants

  - Food (e.g., fresh vegetables and meat)
  - Homes/apartments
- Identify ways in which the cheapest deal may not always be the best deal for the money.

Why We Need Consumer Protection

- Describe situations when a consumer advocacy organization may be needed.
- Develop a list of consumer rights and ways to protect these rights.
- Practice writing or calling a vendor whose product/service was less than satisfactory.
- Role play ways to confront a salesperson with faulty merchandise, stressing assertive communication skills.

Financial Planning

Getting Money

- Invite a county case manager to present information about various financial assistance programs to students and parents.

Budget Your Money

- Assist the student to determine whether the following are income, fixed or flexible expenses:
  - Food
  - Telephone bill
  - SSI check
  - Concert ticket
  - Wages
  - Shoes
  - Credit card bill
  - Trip to zoo
  - Welfare check
  - Bus fare
  - Cable TV bill
  - Doctor bill
  - Rent
  - Water bill
  - Electric bill
  - Unemployment check
  - Car insurance

Using a Bank

- Visit a cash machine/ATM and describe and demonstrate how it works.
- Visit local banks and have personnel describe services, different accounts, and budgeting.
- Acquire actual checks, checkbooks, account logs, etc. for use in teaching a checking and banking unit. Give worksheets or invoices to be logged on the checks and into the record book. Stress balancing records with bank statements.

- With the assistance of family/residential service providers, open up individual checking and savings accounts with each individual at their neighborhood bank.

What is Credit?

- Invite a credit officer from a local bank to speak about credit, loans, interest rates, payment schedules, foreclosure, and application processes.
- Discuss the pros and cons for using credit cards. Note problems that may arise if cards are used carelessly or with no restraint.
- Examine monthly credit statements from stores and/or bank cards (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, etc.). Draw attention to the total cost of the purchases, the percentage of interest being charged, and what payment would be required to pay off just the amount accrued by the interest.
- Discuss the implications of a poor credit rating.
- Contact a store to open a limited credit account for individuals to use to develop a credit rating, and to obtain practice in paying monthly bills.

Financial Planning adapted with permission from Minnesota Department of Education. (1990). *Teaching the possibilities: Home living.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Summary

This chapter represents a very brief exploration of only four of the ways that a student might come in contact with his or her community. This chapter isn't meant to be exhaustive in this regard. It's best used as model for how you might approach any of the myriad of ways that students can participate in their communities.

Questions to Ponder

- How do you define "community participation?"
- What are some strategies to increase an individual's access to the community?

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Chapter Eleven

Recreation & Leisure

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Introduction

Planning for recreation and leisure activities is an integral part of the overall transitional process for students with disabilities. Until recently, students with disabilities were largely excluded from participating in programs with their peers without disabilities. This often resulted from general misperceptions of the ability of students with disabilities to participate, as well as a lack of understanding of how obstacles of participation could be overcome. Fortunately, the trend is changing and students with and without disabilities are recreating together in a variety of programs and activities.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the distinctions between inclusive and accessible recreation, integrated recreation and systematic supports, and adaptive and "special" recreation.
- Begin to develop a set of strategies to assist students plan and implement their transition into adult recreational activity.

Section 1

Planning for Recreation & Leisure Options

Because recreation and leisure activities are so varied and individualized, this area of transition planning requires that students identify their own interests and preferences. Much of the paraprofessional's work is done in the settings where various activities and programs take place. This chapter will discuss the different types of leisure options and provide strategies on how to support students as they explore different recreational and leisure experiences.

The following three general types of recreation and leisure options are typically available:

Inclusive and Accessible Recreation

These types of recreation and leisure activities are available to everyone regardless of the participants' skills and abilities. They are accessible if the participants can easily enter, participate in, and exit the setting in which the activity occurs. Inclusive and accessible recreation activities allow students with disabilities the same choices and opportunities to enjoy a leisure lifestyle as their same-age peers without disabilities. This is the ultimate goal for students with disabilities when planning recreation and leisure activities.

Integrated Recreation and Systematic Supports

Students with disabilities often require some support and assistance in order to participate in recreational activities. This support varies greatly depending on the needs of the individual and their activity of choice. Common supports include one-on-one assistance with the activity; adaptations of equipment, game rules and procedures; and direct facilitation of the social dynamics of an activity so participants with and without disabilities can benefit.

Adaptive or "Special" Recreation

These "special" recreation programs are typically designed for individuals with a specific disability, and consequently segregate participants from others who don't fall under that disability category. It's important for students who participate in these types of programs to also be exposed to recreational opportunities with individuals who don't have disabilities. For example, a student who participates in Special Olympics could use his or her community YMCA to practice and train for the event.

Section 2

Paraprofessional Strategies

It may be helpful to think of recreation and leisure activities in the following categories when working with students in this area of transition planning:

- Leisure alternatives
- Going out on the town
- Leisure at home
- Break time at work
- Publicly supported leisure services
- The great outdoors
- Extracurricular fun at school
- Vacation travel
- Membership organizations

The rest of this section is devoted to providing specific strategies to assist you in exploring each of these options as you help students plan and implement their recreation as adults.

Leisure Alternatives

- Complete various leisure profiles or assessments. Discuss with students any personal barriers or obstacles to leisure participation they have experienced.

- Have students talk with parents, grandparents, and other older friends about their past leisure experiences. Discuss similarities and differences to students' current leisure.
- Bring in local weekly and daily newspapers, recreation program brochures, flyers, etc., that list and advertise upcoming events and recreational activities. Have students work in small groups to identify and list those that interest them. Discuss why they chose what they did.
- Have students plan a weekend that includes preferred leisure activities. Discuss possible obstacles and ways to overcome them.
- Have students write and/or orally report about a recent leisure experience. Why was it a leisure experience?
- Have students choose one particular school or community leisure event that is upcoming to attend. Have each report their experience.
- Obtain schedules from city and neighborhood parks, recreation, community education, and similar recreational agencies. Keep it current and review upcoming events weekly. Discuss ways to get involved and participate.
- Have a representative from various leisure agencies, such as community education or nature centers, visit the classroom to discuss their services. Formulate questions and assign students to ask staff during the visit.

Going Out on the Town

- Attend field trips to community leisure settings such as malls, movie theaters, community centers, museums, and zoos to familiarize students with the environment and the requirements for accessing them. Involve students in planning the outing.
- Have students keep a log of time they spend day to day. Do this for one or two weeks. Have students identify blocks of time they may have available to go on outings.
- Have students bring information about upcoming events and other activities and community events. They will need to read newspapers, listen to radio and TV, talk with friends and family, and so forth to find this information. See how many they can list.
- Have students choose one activity or outing to analyze. Have them answer the questions listed above.
- Ask students to go on one or more outings in the next month or so. Ask them to analyze, as above, two or more possibilities before choosing which to go on. Students should be prepared to discuss their experiences with the class. Ask what they would do differently or the same, next time. Have them choose a classmate to go with.

- Create a bulletin board where students can post upcoming events they learn about. Newspaper clippings, flyers, and handwritten announcements may be posted by students. Have sections labeled *Movies, Theater, Concerts, Sports,* and the like. Have students change the board each week.
- Purchase a large city map or have students make one of the community in which they live. Map the various sites where community events typically take place shopping centers, movie theaters, civic centers, fairgrounds, athletic fields, etc. For each venue, have students determine the distance to the site from their respective homes and list the various ways they can travel to the sites. Be specific by giving bus route numbers and names of friends with whom they can carpool, etc.
- Have students prepare a budget for an outing, pick an activity to do on an outing (for example, a movie) and determine the total costs, including transportation, tickets, food during and after, etc.
- Have students, in groups of two or three, imagine how to "get ready" to go to the following leisure settings: a movie, rock concert, play, nice restaurant, county fair, friend's house, orchestra, awards banquet, wedding. Find out what they would do to get ready, how they would look, etc. Discuss their responses.

Leisure at Home

- Have students record their home activities for one to two weeks, detailing not only leisure pursuits, but time spent in such activities as eating, sleeping, grooming, and doing homework. Discuss how time is spent. Make a list and rank order home leisure pursuits of students.
- Talk with students about television. Identify and discuss what programs they most frequently watch and why. Discuss the effects of watching too much TV at the exclusion of other pursuits. Find out what students would do if TV was outlawed for two weeks. Challenge students to turn off the TV for one week (which includes not playing video games and watching videos).
- Teach students about how families from different cultures spend their free time.
- Introduce students to common board and table games. Teach students how to play various games. Discuss the effects of playing board and table games. Discuss being a good or bad sport.
- Visit stores that sell role-playing games. Speak with the proprietor about this new type of game playing — why do these games interest people, how to get started, etc. Discuss ways students can connect with role-playing clubs. Discuss ways of incorporating playing these games into hobby development (for example, collecting and painting game pieces).

- Discuss hobbies. Determine if students currently have a hobby (for example, card or record collections). Have students bring their hobbies to share. Talk about how to start a hobby. Contact and visit businesses that promote hobby development. Talk with a community education coordinator about hobby-related classes. Find out if there are local clubs that promote particular hobbies. Find out how to join.
- Sponsor an all-school hobby fair. Have students bring in and display their hobbies and tell other students how to get started in the hobby.
- Have several board and table games available for students' use during free time at school. Designate an area where interested students can set up and play, over time, a role-playing or fantasy/adventure-based board game. Start a jigsaw puzzle and let students add pieces whenever they pass by.
- Have students create a new board game. Have teams of students work together on this project. Take an age-inappropriate but familiar game and have students redo the game, keeping the same rules and methods of play, but adapting it to be more age appropriate.

Break Time at Work

- Have students imagine that going to school is their job and the classrooms are their work stations. Have them determine when they get breaks, where they spend breaks, and what they typically do during a break. Discuss how this is similar or different from typical work placements.
- Discuss breaks with the school's vocational work experience coordinator and learn what break options exist within companies that currently employ students. Have these work coordinators visit the class to talk to students about break options and their importance in various work settings (you may need to arrange initial meetings with employers to determine these options).
- Role play taking a break. Students can choose what to do for 15 minutes.
- Discuss any preplanning one would need to do to prepare for an anticipated break the next day at work. For example, ask students what they would need to do at home — pack a snack with lunch, include a deck of cards, bring coins for the vending machine, pack a personal stereo, or include a book or magazine.
- Ask students to interview one or both parents and/or a neighbor about breaks they take at work. Find out what they do and why. Share this information with the class.

- Invite personnel directors, business executives, and other personnel from various job sites throughout the community to share the relationship of leisure to work and the importance of taking breaks.

Publicly Supported Leisure Services

- Have representatives from the local parks and recreation and community education departments come to the classroom to talk with students. Have them bring current program schedules to pass out. Discuss how to use a recreation center. Practice registering for an enrichment class. Find out what additional supports, if any, are available to youth with disabilities.
- Walk or take a bus to the nearest recreation center for a guided tour. Make sure to spend time there so students can enjoy the offerings of the park and center.
- Arrange with a recreation center to teach students how to access and use the park and center. Class could meet there once a week, over a period of time (three to five weeks) so that students acquire the necessary skills to use the park and programs.
- Plan with the community education coordinator to arrange for an after-school service club that interested students can join and lead. The club could be sponsored by community education with a volunteer adult advisor recruited from other community education programs. Club members would also learn about other enrichment classes being offered and how to access them.
- Organize self-advocacy groups to go to parks and recreation centers and community education departments to enhance awareness of staff about ways to include youth with disabilities in programs and services.
- Attend a neighborhood advisory council or recreation association meeting to hear how parks and recreation and community education services are talked about by various community members and decision makers.
- Have students go to their neighborhood recreation center and find out the following information: name of director, phone number of center, current program schedule (bring back flyers and schedules), facility layout, hours of center, any special rules, characteristics of typical park users, etc. Hand in reports to teacher and photocopy. Have students make these into a resource guide for future reference.

The Great Outdoors

- Take a nature hike around your school, its playing fields, and neighboring streets. In teams of two to four students, observe and record plant and animal life. Talk about your findings in class. How did students feel about their observations?

- Ask students to visit one or more of these outdoor environments: backyard, neighborhood park, regional and/or state park. Have students report back on the characteristics of these environments which did or didn't make their visit interesting and worthwhile.
- Have students write to a national park office to request informational brochures about the parks. Plot the locations on a map of the United States. Determine the unique characteristics of these parks that might help to draw visitors. Discuss the implications of the location of the parks in relation to urban areas which may be nearby.
- Have students record outdoor activities they engage in over a two-week period. Have students write about an experience they particularly enjoyed and one they didn't especially like.
- In winter, have an ice-sculpture exhibition in the school yard. Students can work in teams of two to three people. Sponsor a winter festival for other students in the school.
- Create a mural depicting different outdoor activities which students in your class and throughout the school may or already enjoy doing. Make these seasonal murals and place them in locations for all to see.
- Help students rent snowshoes or cross-country skis and hike or ski in the school yard.
- Take students on a field trip to a nature center. Hike with an interpretive naturalist. Do a nature-related activity upon return to the center (for example, paper making, molds of animal prints).
- In teams of two, have students collect litter around the school yard and immediate neighborhood. Weigh garbage bags and give a prize to the team that collects the most. Talk about ways humankind can eliminate pollution.
- Take students to a store that sells outdoor recreation clothing and equipment. Teach them about the best way to dress for a hike, cross-country skiing, canoe trip, or another outdoor pursuit. Have students list the equipment needed.
- Ask students to identify a favorite outdoor space around or near their homes and describe it to their classmates. What do they enjoy doing in this space?

Extracurricular Fun at School

- Infuse leisure-related activities in other curricula areas so that learning is fun for students. For example, teach math skills while playing Monopoly or bowling; teach history through role-playing board games; teach grooming and hygiene at the end of a workout at the YMCA; teach business by analyzing sports trading cards; and teach creative thinking through video games.

- Invite faculty advisors and club officers to talk with students about extracurricular activities available to them.
- Arrange for students to attend various extracurricular activities to observe and report back to class.
- Assist interested students in becoming active on Community Transition Interagency Committees, leisure subcommittees, community education advisory committees, etc.
- Help students problem solve any barriers that might be facing them.
- Have students look through yearbooks, school newspapers, and posters to find out about their school's extracurricular activities. Have them choose one or two activities in which to participate.
- After determining five questions to ask about the activity, have students interview current members.

Vacation Travel

- Take students on a field trip to a travel agent. Have them talk with an agent about what to do to take a vacation. Collect travel brochures and discuss in class.
- Have students visit an airport, bus station, and train terminal. Talk with ticketing agents about procedures for making reservations, buying tickets, luggage allowances, and when to arrive at the terminals.
- Have students take a hypothetical trip. Have small groups of students (two or three each) determine a vacation spot. Students must plan the trip from start to finish – including the cost of tickets for all travel (land, water, air, parking, car rentals, etc.); travel restrictions, if any; clothing and luggage needs; who to contact before leaving (family, friends, utilities, paper, etc.); lodging; attractions; and so forth.
- Bring in clothing for a long weekend trip. Have students pack the suitcase. Discuss items that are missing or should not be included.
- Talk about travel spots. Have students identify where they have gone or would like to go. Have students look at brochures and newspaper ads for popular vacation spots. Locate them on the maps. Discuss transportation alternatives to these places.
- Help students practice writing postcards about a hypothetical trip. Have them mail one to themselves.
- Have guest speakers come in to show slides and videotapes of vacations they offer or of places they have been.

- Have students list any special accommodations they may need to go on a vacation and trip, such as wheelchair access, medications, other adaptive equipment, etc.

Sharing the Experiences: Membership Organizations

- As a class, take field trips to a nearby membership organization to learn about its focus, membership requirements, member benefits, and responsibilities. Have a staff member conduct a tour. If one-time guest passes are available for students, ask for and distribute these.
- Collect and compile a comprehensive resource file on membership organizations in your community. Students may assist by contacting and/or stopping into membership organizations to get literature.
- Using the guest passes obtained above, or by special permission of the member organization, plan an outing to use the facilities of the organization. Afterwards, discuss the experience with students, getting their personal feedback.
- Weigh and discuss the similarities and differences between membership in organizations as a form of leisure versus participation in community education and other publicly supported leisure alternatives.
- Have students find a friend, neighbor, or acquaintance who is currently a member of an organization and interview them to determine why they joined.
- Discuss how membership in an organization may or may not enhance the social integration and community participation of students who have disabilities.
- Discuss specific barriers students may have with joining a membership organization. Explore ways to overcome these barriers.

Volunteering: Enjoying Oneself While Helping Others

- Contact a representative from your local Voluntary Action Center to visit your classroom to discuss volunteering and volunteer opportunities.
- Have students make and post a comprehensive list of volunteer activities they could realistically do in these different areas: home, neighborhood, school, church, parks, social service agencies, other.
- Assign students to do a specific volunteer activity for a school semester. Have them maintain a log and/or report back to the classroom on their experiences (good, bad, etc.).
- Have students compose an article for the school newspaper about the importance of volunteering.

- Talk with work site coordinators and/or employers about how, if at all, the volunteer activities of employees benefits the workplace.
- Talk with school administrators about using a school hallway bulletin board to post volunteer opportunities available for students. Have students change the bulletin periodically to update notices.
- Sponsor a Volunteer Expo and invite agencies to have informational booths to share volunteer possibilities with students, family, and community members who visit.
- Volunteer as a class to organize and run a water station at a local walk-a-thon.
- Set up and dismantle a community volunteer fair.

Summary

Recreation and leisure may be the most enjoyable of all transition activities. What better task can you imagine than to provide instruction and role modeling in how to have fun? We hope you're able to gain some vicarious pleasure as you help students plan their leisure time and that you have some opportunities to "play" with students as well.

Questions to Ponder

- The role of the paraprofessional may not be perfectly clear when it comes to helping students plan and implement recreational activities. Is it your responsibility to keep your students at "arm's length?" Is it part of your job to "have fun" with students? Are you comfortable simply enjoying yourself in the presence of your students?

Appendices

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Appendix A

The Individualized Education Plan

Page 1 of

IEP Meeting Date: ____________
IEP Written Date: ____________
Last Assessment Summary Report Date: ____________
Progress Report Frequency: ____________

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

A. STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's Name	Sex M F	Grade	Birthdate	ID Number
Street Address City, State, Zip			Native Language/Primary Communication Mode	
School of Enrollment		School Telephone ( )	Providing District Number	
Student's Permanent Resident Address (if different)			Resident District Number	

B. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent(s)' Name(s)	Home Telephone ( )	Daytime Telephone ( )	School District Number
Parent's Address (if different)		Native Language/Primary Communication Mode	
Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Name(s)		☐ Guardian(s)	☐ Surrogate Parent(s)
Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Address (if different)		Home Telephone ( )	Daytime Telephone ( )

C. IEP INFORMATION

IEP Manager Name & Title	Telephone Number ( )	Type of IEP: ☐ Initial ☐ Annual ☐ Interim	
Primary Disability	State Code	Secondary Disability(ies)	State Code(s)

D. IEP TEAM MEETING

Title	Names of All Team Members	Indicate Attendance
Parent		☐ Yes ☐ No
Parent		☐ Yes ☐ No
Student		☐ Yes ☐ No
School District Representative		☐ Yes ☐ No
Special Education Teacher		☐ Yes ☐ No
General Education Teacher (K-12 Only)		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No

A copy is sent to the student's resident district when the student is not a resident of the providing district.

Copies: Due Process File IEP Manager
Parent

This form is available in several languages, Braille, or other format. Contact the director of special education.

Page of Student's Name: ______________________

E.1	**PROGRAM PLANNING**
	Following initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.

How the student's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the K-12 **general curriculum**:
(for students using Braille, includes how Braille will be implemented through integration with other classroom activities)
For **preschool** children or students age **18 – 22**, how the disability affects participation in **appropriate activities**:

Summary of Strengths and Concerns (Optional)

Student's **strengths:**

Educational concerns of parent(s) and student:

For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, how the student's **interests** and **preferences** were **considered** and **included** if the student did not attend this IEP meeting:

Page of Student's Name: ______________________________

E.2	PROGRAM PLANNING

Performance Areas

☐ Intellectual/Cognitive Functioning
☐ Academic Performance
☐ Functional Skills
☐ Communication
☐ Motor Skills
☐ Emotional, Social, and Behavioral Development
☐ Sensory
☐ Health/Physical

For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, use section E.3 (Transition Program Planning).

Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.

Present Level(s) of Educational Performance:

Student-based Needs:

Annual Goal:
___ of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Annual Goal:
___ of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Page of Student's Name: ____________________

E.3 TRANSITION PROGRAM PLANNING

Transition Areas
(All areas must be addressed.)

☐ Employment
☐ Post-Secondary Education & Training
☐ Community Participation
☐ Recreation/Leisure
☐ Home Living/Daily Living

Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.

Future Outcome/Goal:

Present Levels of Performance:

Student-based Needs: *(for instruction, experiences, and related services)* ***If no need, provide rationale.***

Activities Planned to Meet Future Outcome/Goal: *(school courses/standards; home, community, and work experiences; and/or related services)* ***Identify who is accountable for each activity.***

Annual Goal:
___of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Annual Goal:
___of ___ Goals

Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:

Progress Notes:

Page of Student's Name: ______________________________

E.4 PROFILES OF LEARNING

See documentation attached to this IEP.

F. ADAPTATIONS IN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

F.1 **Adaptations** and the duration of these adaptations, including supplemental aids and services to be used in general and special education that will be made available **to the student** (e.g., grading, staff, transportation, facilities, materials, equipment, assistive technology devices and services, curriculum, methods, coordination of support services, vocational services and equipment, limited English proficiency services, school discipline policy, paraprofessional services, and other services):

F.2 Program modifications or supports for **school personnel** that will be provided to meet the student's identified needs:

G. RIGHTS AT AGE OF MAJORITY

Address ***only*** *in IEPs for students who will reach age 17 during the tenure of this IEP.*

☐ The student, upon reaching age 17, has been informed of the rights which will transfer to him/her upon reaching the age of majority (18), unless legal guardian or conservator has been appointed.

Student's Signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________

Student's Name: ______________________________

H.1 MINNESOTA STATEWIDE TESTING

Address only in IEPs developed for grades 3, 5, 8, 10+. Grade level to be covered: __________

(Check the appropriate box.)

A. ☐ If applicable, the team plans for the following **accommodations** for test administration: (Test **modifications** are not allowed for Statewide Testing.)

B. ☐ Student is **exempt**. The alternate assessment will be used.

1. Rationale for exemption:

H.2 BASIC STANDARDS TESTING

Address only in the IEP for grade 8 or above.

Prior to Basic Standards Testing, the team determined the following standards for this student:

Accommodations if appropriate or if needed:

Modifications if appropriate or if needed:

If **exempt**, the reason:

If **exempt**, the alternate assessment(s) to be used:

Check the appropriate box to indicate the level the student will attempt for testing:

	State	Individual *	Exempt **	Passed
Reading:				
Math:				
Writing:				

* If the modification is to alter the district's passing level, **test score expected** to be achieved is entered.

** If the student is **exempt,** the goals on the IEP will be the criteria for awarding the diploma.

Page of Student's Name: ______________________________

I. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES TO MEET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Instruction or Service Provided	Location		Anticipated Frequency	Total Minutes Per Week		Service	
	General Education	Special Education		Indirect	Direct	Start Date	Anticipated Duration

J. EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

I.3 Are **extended school year services** required for this student? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, reasons are described here or attached.

K. INTERAGENCY SERVICES

Agency Name	Interagency/Organization Linkages *(Identify services, funding, responsibilities, etc.)*

L. ALTERED SCHOOL DAY

Has this student's day been altered? ☐ Yes ☐ No **If yes**, reasons are described here or attached.

M. PLACEMENT DETERMINATION: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

M.1 Activities With Students Without Disabilities

Check the appropriate box(es).

If in K-12, activities in which the student will be participating with students who do not have disabilities:

☐ **All** the following activities

☐ Core Subject Areas : ______________________

- ☐ Art
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Assemblies
- ☐ Lunch
- ☐ School to Work
- ☐ Recess
- ☐ Field Trips

☐ Extracurricular Activities: ______________________

☐ Other: ______________________

M.2 LRE Justification

Other options considered and why rejected, and **why** this student's disability requires service(s) in this setting:

M.3 Federal Child Count Setting

Check the appropriate box:

K – 12 +		Setting		ECSE Age 3 to Kindergarten Entrance
General Education (In special education less than 21%)	→	☐ I.	←	Early Childhood Setting or Homebased
Resource Room (21 to 60%)	→	☐ II.	←	Parttime EC Setting or Home and ECSE or Reverse Mainstreaming or Itinerant Services
Separate Class (more than 60%)	→	☐ III.	←	ECSE Classroom
Public Separate Day School	→	☐ IV.	←	Public Separate Day School
Private Separate Day School	→	☐ V.	←	Private Separate Day School
Public Residential	→	☐ VI.	←	Public Residential
Private Residential	→	☐ VII.	←	Private Residential
Homebased/Homebound/Hospital	→	☐ VIII.	←	Homebound/Hospital

Note: Provide Notice of Proposed Special Education Services

Appendix B

Information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para

State Laws Regarding Paraprofessionals

State of Minnesota, Omnibus Education Bill of 1998
Article 2, Section 9

(b) For paraprofessionals employed to work in programs for students with disabilities, the school board in each district shall ensure that:

1. before or immediately upon employment, each paraprofessional develops sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability, among other things, to begin meeting the needs of the students which whom the paraprofessional works;
2. annual training opportunities are available to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities; and
3. a districtwide process obligates each paraprofessional to work under the ongoing direction of a licensed teacher and, where appropriate and possible, the supervision of a school nurse.

Guiding Principles for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

These principles were used to guide the development of competencies for Minnesota paraprofessionals during the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998:

- Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student-related activities.
- The entire instructional team participates within clearly-defined roles in a dynamic, changing environment to provide an appropriate educational program for students.

- To ensure quality education and safety for students and staff, paraprofessionals are provided with a district orientation and training prior to assuming those responsibilities.
- Teachers and others responsible for the work of paraprofessionals have the skills necessary to work effectively with paraprofessionals.
- By recognizing a paraprofessional's training, responsibilities, experience, and skill levels, they are placed in positions for which they are qualified and which effectively and efficiently use their skills to enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.
- Administrators exercise leadership by recognizing paraprofessionals as educational partners.

Core Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

The following core competencies are expected of all paraprofessionals working in Minnesota schools. These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed above. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

Core Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 A sensitivity to the beliefs, traditions and values across cultures and the effect of the relationships among children, families, and schooling.		X	
K2 Awareness of the human and legal rights and responsibilities of parents and children/youth as they relate to individual learning needs.			X
K3 Understanding of the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel.		X	
K4 Understanding of the purposes and goals of education for all individuals.			X
K5 Awareness of responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures.		X	
S1 Carry out responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures.			X
Additions:			

2. Characteristics of Learners	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Awareness of the similarities and differences among the cognitive, communicative, physical, social, and emotional needs of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.			X
K2 Awareness of the effects that exceptional conditions have on an individual's life and family in the home, school, and community.			X
K3 Awareness of characteristics and effects of the cultural, linguistic, and environmental background of the child and family.			X
K4 Understanding of the effect of medications commonly prescribed for individuals with learning needs.		X	
K5 Awareness of the educational implications of the above factors.			X
Additions:			
3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation			
K1 Awareness of district's ability to provide for and use the tools of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation.		X	
S1 With direction from a professional, make and document observations appropriate to the individual with learning needs.			X
S2 Provide objective documentation of observations to appropriate professionals.			X
Additions:			
4. Instructional Content and Practice			
K1 Awareness of learning styles of individuals.		X	
K2 Awareness of the demands and expectations of various learning environments.			X
K3 Awareness of a variety of instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and materials.			X
S1 Establish and maintain rapport with learners.	X		
S2 Use developmentally and age-appropriate strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies, as directed, to accomplish instructional objectives.			X
S3 Under the direction of a professional, assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the learner.			X

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
S4 Follow written plans, seeking clarification as needed.			X
Additions:			
5. Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment			
K1 Awareness of the environmental factors that affect teaching and learning, including health and safety issues.		X	
K2 Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning.			X
K3 Understanding of strategies and techniques for facilitating the integration of individuals with learning needs in various settings.		X	
K4 Awareness by the paraprofessional of how they impact the overall learning environment for students and staff.		X	
S1 Assist in maintaining a safe, healthy, learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures.		X	
S2 As directed, prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning.			X
S3 Use strategies that promote the learner's independence.			X
Additions:			
6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills			
K1 Understanding of applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals.		X	
K2 Understanding of ethical considerations inherent in the management of behaviors.		X	
K3 Awareness of the factors that influence the behavior of individuals with learning needs.		X	
K4 Awareness of the social skills needed for current and future environments.		X	
K5 Awareness of effective instructional practices that enhance the development of social skills.		X	
K6 Awareness of the range and implications of management approaches/strategies that influence the behavior of individual's with learning needs.		X	

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K7 Understanding of the district-building behavior management plans for students.		X	
S1 Demonstrate effective strategies for the management of behaviors.			X
S2 Assist in modifying the learning environment to manage behavior.			X
S3 Collect and provide objective, accurate information to professionals, as appropriate.			X
S4 Use appropriate strategies and techniques in a variety of settings to assist in the development of social skills.			X
Additions:			
7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships			
K1 Awareness of typical concerns of parents of individuals with learning needs.		X	
K2 Awareness of the roles of individuals with learning needs, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program.		X	
S1 Use ethical practices for confidential communication about learners with learning needs.		X	
S2 Under the direction of a professional, use constructive strategies in working with individuals with learning needs, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments.			X
S3 Follow the instructions of the professional.		X	
S4 Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and other school and community personnel.			X
S5 Participate as requested in conferences with families or primary caregivers as members of the educational team.			X
S6 Use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, roles, and instructional activities.			X
S7 Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritage, lifestyles, and value systems among children, youth, and families.			X
S8 Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to use effective problem solving, engage in flexible thinking, employ appropriate conflict management techniques, and analyze one's own personal strengths and preferences.			X

	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
Additions:			
8. Professionalism and Ethical Practices			
K1 Recognition of the paraprofessional as a positive role model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.		X	
S1 Demonstrate commitment to assisting learners in achieving their highest potential.	X		
S2 Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions among roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, professionals, and other support personnel.		X	
S3 Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's responsibilities as a paraprofessional.		X	
S4 Demonstrate respect for culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of students.	X		
S5 Demonstrate a willingness to participate in ongoing staff development, self-evaluation, and apply constructive feedback.	X		
S6 Demonstrate proficiency in academic skills including oral and written communication.	X		
S7 Practice within the context of written standards and policies of the school or agency where they are employed.		X	
Additions:			

Core competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998, and are based on the competencies found in: Council on Exceptional Children (1998). *What every special educator must know, 3rd ed.* Minneapolis, MN: Author. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para.*

Specialized Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

In addition to the core competencies, the following specialized competencies are expected of paraprofessionals working in specific positions (early childhood, transition to work, behavior management, academic program assistants, and physical/other health impairments). These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed on page 113. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

Early Childhood
Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Early Childhood, Home Visitor Programs	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Understanding their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children.			X
K2 Understanding of their role in listening and communicating with parents to gather information which the service delivery team can build on to meet the needs of the child and family.	X		
K3 Awareness of health care providers, social services and other resources available in the community to assist parents and their child.		X	
K4 Understanding their role in enhancing parent interactions with their child by demonstrating effective techniques/materials to stimulate cognitive, physical, social and language development.		X	
Additions:			
2. Early Childhood,Center-Based Programs			
K1 Awareness of basic developmental stages, ages 0-5.		X	
K2 Understanding of their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing and implementing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children.			X
S1 Ability to use developmentally appropriate instructional interventions for curriculum activities in the areas of cognitive, motor, self-help, social/play, and language development for infants and young children ages 0-5.			X
S2 Ability to gather information about the performance of children in all areas of development and to share it with professional colleagues.		X	
S3 Demonstrate competence in preparing and using developmentally appropriate materials, under the direction of a professional.		X	
S4 Demonstrate an understanding of the paraprofessional's role in communicating and working effectively with parents, other primary caregivers, and team members.			X
Additions:			

Transition to Work and Adult Life Specialized Competencies

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Transition to Work and Adult Life	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Understanding of the need for transition-related services.		X	
K2 Awareness of how to access information on community resources available to individuals with disabilities of transition age and their families.		X	
K3 Understanding of the importance of interagency collaboration.		X	
K4 Knowledge of the ethical and legal standards of conduct in relationships with students, parents, adult service providers, employers, and coworkers.		X	
S1 Understanding of transition-related assessment strategies and ability to provide team with information useful to the development of transition-related goals and objectives.			X
S2 Ability to facilitate and support student involvement in decision making.		X	
S3 Ability to identify and develop accommodations and natural supports in the work setting.		X	
S4 Knowledge of and ability to provide instruction and support in leisure skills, social skills, self-determination skills, community mobility skills, and independent living skills.			X
S5 Ability to provide instruction and support in work-related behaviors, job-seeking skills, and job-specific skills in school or at a community work site.			X
Additions:			

Behavior Management
Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Behavior Management	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Understanding of personality and social/ emotional development.		X	
K2 Understanding of behavioral/emotional challenges and the interaction with other disabilities.		X	
K3 Understanding of the need for utilizing formal and informal assessment strategies in obtaining information necessary for educational and behavioral programming for individual students.		X	
K4 Understanding of the rationale, components, operation and evaluation of the program models in which they are working.		X	
S1 Ability to document change in learner behavior in both academic and social areas.		X	
S2 Ability to observe and record pupil behavior utilizing different social rating systems.		X	
S3 Demonstrate the use of different methods to change and maintain behavior.		X	
S4 Ability to implement remedial techniques in academic skill areas with learners.		X	
S5 Ability to use materials designed for skill development in the social areas.			X
S6 Ability to collaborate effectively with team members.			X
Additions:			

Academic Program Assistants
Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Academic Program Assistants	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Knowledge of the paraprofessional's role and function in the specific academic setting.		X	
K2 Awareness of Minnesota Graduation Standards, including state testing and high standards as outlined in student IEPs.		X	
K3 Awareness of factors which influence cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.		X	
K4 Knowledge of educational terminology related to specific program or age level.		X	
S1 Ability to instruct students in academic subjects using lesson plans and instructional strategies developed by teachers and other professional staff.			X
S2 Ability to gather and record data about the performance and behavior of individual students.		X	
S3 Ability to confer with special and general education practitioners about individual student schedules, instructional goals, progress, and performance.		X	
S4 Ability to use developmental and age-appropriate instructional methods and reinforcement techniques.			X
S5 Ability to effectively use available instructional resources including technology, as directed by the professional.		X	
S6 Understanding of various learning styles and the ability to implement corresponding teaching methods.			X
S7 Demonstrate the ability to implement techniques to include students in general education as outlined in IEPs.			X
Additions:			

Physical and Other Health Impairments Specialized Competency Statements

K=Knowledge S=Skill

1. Physical and Other Health Impairments	prior to employment	within first 2 weeks	within 45 school days
K1 Understanding of specific student environments and learning modification/ accommodation strategies.		X	
K2 Understanding of medical conditions and emergency procedures for specific students, including care for seizures, latex allergies, catheterizations, tracheotomies, gastrostomies, ventilators, etc.		X	
K3 Understanding of proper storage, documentation, administration, and side effects of specific student medications. (NOTE: specific training is required to administer medication.)		X	
K4 Awareness of specific student transportation issues and emergency evacuation procedures.		X	
K5 Awareness of legal and liability issues specific to vulnerable and medically fragile students.		X	
S1 Demonstrate competence in the use of proper body mechanics for self and specific student when transferring, lifting and positioning that student.		X	
S2 Demonstrate competence in implementation, safety, and maintenance of all necessary adaptive, assistive, and instructional technology and equipment.			X
S3 Certification in age appropriate CPR (infant/ child, adult) and Basic First Aid, and the ability to respond appropriately during an emergency situation.			X
S4 Ability to properly assist students with activities of daily living, including toileting, feeding, dressing, and mobility.			X
S5 Ability to implement strategies that encourage student independence and participation in all areas of development and classroom learning.			X
Additions:			

Specialized competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para*

Appendix C
Disability-Related Legislation

There are several pieces of state and federal legislation that define and support transition, which are described below.

Federal Definition of Transition Services

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act has a new name: IDEA, short for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476). This act adds a new definition of transition services, adds transition services to students' IEPs, and makes changes in transition programs authorized under Part C of the law. The following is the new definition of transition services:

> Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including:
>
> - Post secondary education.
> - Vocational training.
> - Integrated employment (including supported employment).
> - Continuing and adult education.
> - Adult services.
> - Independent living.
> - Community participation.
>
> The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and may include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The law also specifically refers to transition services in the overall definition of an "individualized education plan," or IEP. IEPs must now include "a statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than age sixteen and annually thereafter (and when determined appropriate for the individual, beginning at age fourteen or younger), including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting."

In addition, the law attends to the transition needs of students who use assistive technology. Under IDEA, transition programs that get federal funding may "develop and disseminate exemplary programs and practices that meet the unique needs of students who utilize assistive technology devices and services as such students make the transition to post-secondary education, vocational transition, competitive employment, and continuing education or adult services."

Regulations for IDEA (Public Law 101-476)

The following transition-related IDEA regulations were published in the Federal Register on September 29, 1992, to indicate how IDEA will be interpreted:

> **Transition Service Participants:** If a purpose of the meeting is the consideration of transition services for a student, the public agency shall invite the student and a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. If the student does not attend, the public agency shall take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered; and if an agency invited to send a representative to a meeting does not do so, the public agency shall take other steps to obtain the participation of the other agency in the planning of any transition services. (300.344)
>
> **Parent Participation:** If a purpose of the meeting is the consideration of transition services for a student, the notice (to parents) must also indicate this purpose. Indicate that the agency will invite the student and note any other agency that will be invited to send a representative. (300.345)
>
> **Content of Individualized Education Program:** The IEP for each student, beginning no later than age sixteen (and at a younger age, if deemed appropriate), must include a statement of the needed transition services including, if appropriate, a statement of each public agency's responsibilities or linkages, or both, before the student leaves the school setting. If the IEP team determines that services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified, the IEP must include a statement to that effect and the basis upon which the determination was made. (300.346)
>
> **Agency Responsibilities for Transition Services:** If a participating agency fails to provide agreed-upon transition services contained in the IEP of a student with a disability, the public agency responsible for the student's education shall, as soon as possible, initiate a meeting to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives and, if necessary, revise the student's IEP. Nothing in this part relieves any participating agency, including a State vocational rehabilitation agency, of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition services that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency. (300.347)

Interagency committee: The local committee shall:

A Meet at least quarterly to fulfill the duties prescribed in statute; *and*

B Report annually when directed to the Department of Education summarizing progress and recommendations.

Operating procedures fulfilling the requirements in each statute must be included in the district's total special education system plan. (Chapter 3525.0650)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17)

In 1997, Congress amended the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 105-17). Notwithstanding the changes, the definition of transition services has remained the same continuing the tradition begun in 1990 with the passage of P.L. 101-476 of preparing individuals with disabilities for life after high school. The current legislation promotes effective transition programming by:

- Providing a definition of " transition services."
- Listing the set of coordinated activities that comprise transition services, and detailing the basis for determining which activities are appropriate for an individual student.
- Specifying the process by which a statement of needed transition services is included in the student's IEP.
- Describing the responsibilities of the educational agency to monitor the provisions of IDEA.

The changes in the law include:

- Transition services for youth with disabilities should begin at age 14, be updated annually and be focused on the child's course of study. The law states, "Beginning at age 14, and updated annually, a statement of the transition service needs of the child under the applicable components of the child's IEP that focuses on the child's courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program) [P.L. 105-17, Section 614 (d) (1) (A) (vii)]".
- By age 16 (or younger if determined by the IEP team) the transition part of the IEP should contain a statement of interagency responsibilities and any other needed linkages [P.L. 105-17, Section 614 (d) (1) (A) (vii) (II)].
- At least one year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, "a statement that the child has been informed of his or her rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under section 615 (m) . . ." [P.L.105-17, Section 614(d)(1)(A)(vii)(III)].

- States may transfer rights to children with disabilities reaching the age of majority under State law, who have not been determined to be incompetent, so long as both the student and the parent are notified[Section 615 (m)].

Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 revise and extend the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 until the year 2003. Some of the salient features of the legislation include:

- Definition of Transition Services is identical to the one in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Development of linkages between State vocational rehabilitation programs and workforce investment activities carried out under the Workforce Investment Partnership Act of 1998.
- The responsibility of the Secretary of Education to coordinate all activities related to individuals with disabilities within and across programs administered by the Federal Government.
- Setting aside funds for outreach to minorities.
- Revision of requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services plans, individual eligibility, individualized rehabilitation employment plans, vocational rehabilitation services, group services evaluation standards and performance indicators, and monitoring and review.
- Elimination of discretionary technical assistance to State rehabilitation agencies and community rehabilitation programs, grants and contracts for vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, loan guarantees for community rehabilitation programs and comprehensive rehabilitation centers.
- Funds for special demonstration programs, migrant and seasonal farm workers programs and recreational programs.
- Elimination of discretionary grants for reader services for blind individuals and interpreter services for deaf individuals.
- Award of competitive, one-time, time-limited grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to establish and operate projects in telecommuting for individuals with disabilities and self-employment for individuals with disabilities.
- Funds for services to Individuals with Significant Disabilities, including Independent Living Services and Centers for Independent Living.

Other Legislation Supporting Transition

In addition to IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, two additional laws supporting transition are also in place: Public Law 101-392, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, and PL 100-336, the Americans with Disabilities Act. Each of these laws gives additional strength and direction regarding the design of transition programs and support services.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-332)

Signed into law on October 31, 1998, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 presents a new vision of vocational and technical education for the 21st century. The main goal of the legislation is to improve student achievement and prepare students for postsecondary education and careers. Some of the highlights of the legislation include:

- Reform and innovation in vocational and technical education to ensure that students gain the skills and knowledge necessary to meet academic standards and industry-recognized skill standards, and to prepare for postsecondary education and high-skill, high-wage careers.
- Alignment of vocational and technical education with State and local efforts to reform secondary schools and improve postsecondary education.
- Promotes the development of integrated, "one-stop" education and workforce development systems at the State and local level.
- Focuses on high-quality programs that integrate academic and vocational education, address the needs of individuals who are members of special populations, involves parents and employers, provide strong linkages between secondary and postsecondary education develop, improve and expand the use of technology and provide professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators.
- Gives States, school districts, and postsecondary institutions greater flexibility to design services and activities that meet the needs of their students and communities.
- Reauthorizes Tech-Prep
- Promotes using work-based learning and new technologies in tech-prep programs and partnering with business, labor organizations, and institutions of higher education.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA)

The STWOA was passed in 1994 as a joint effort of the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor. It has helped to build state and local school to work systems to prepare all students for high-skill, high-wage jobs or further education and training. The Act is designed to assist "...both male and female youth from a broad range of backgrounds and circumstances, including disadvantaged youth, youth with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, youth with disabilities, youth with limited English proficiency, migrant children, school dropouts, and academically talented youth [P.L. 103-239, Section 4 (2)]. STWOA requires that school to work systems have three elements:

- School-based learning, which includes career exploration and counseling, instruction in a career major, and a program of study based on high academic and occupational skill standards.
- Work-based learning, which includes structured job training or work experiences (including paid work experience), workplace mentoring, and instruction in industry-specific skills.
- Connecting activities, which help to bring schools, youth, families, and employers together to connect both the worlds of school and work.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The purpose of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) is to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate to end discrimination against persons with disabilities. The ADA guarantees equal access for individuals with disabilities in the following areas:

- **Employment:** No employer shall discriminate against any qualified person with a disability in regard to all terms, conditions or privileges of employment. Employers with 25 or more workers must comply by July 26, 1992. Employers with 15 or more workers must comply by July 26, 1994.
- **Public accommodations:** No person shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, such as restaurants, hotels, doctor offices, grocery stores, museums, retail stores.
- **State and local government services:** No qualified person with a disability may be discriminated against by a department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a state or local government.
- **Transportation:** Services owned by private companies must make new over-the-road buses accessible. Transportation "phase-ins" for accessibility range from 30 days to three years.
- **Telecommunications:** Telephone services offered to the general public must include interstate and intrastate telecommunication relay services, allowing customers with disabilities who use non-voice terminal devices to have equal service to those who use voice telephone services. Telecommunications relay services became effective July 26, 1994.

Appendix D
The Personal Futures Planning Process

How to Begin

- The facilitator and co-facilitator introduce themselves and share information about their general background and experiences with the group.
- Facilitators ask family members and participants to introduce themselves and share any pertinent information they wish.
- Facilitators provide participants with a brief introduction to the personal futures planning process.

Instructions for Facilitators

- Facilitators first explain to participants that the personal futures planning process is like a treasure hunt. The goal is to collect information about the focus person in the form of memories, thoughts, and ideas.
- The group is then informed that they will, over the course of the meeting, discuss six topic areas in the focus person's life. These areas are:

  1 Background
  2 Relationships
  3 Places
  4 Choices
  5 Preferences
  6 Focus on the future for self-determination

- Specific questions which can prompt discussion in these areas are included on the following pages.
- When all of the topic areas have been covered in the personal futures discussion, the facilitators distribute and explain to family members a "self-determination questionnaire". This questionnaire is to be filled out by family members over the course of the next week, so that it can be used at the next family education and support session.

1 · Background

In this first step of the personal futures planning session, the family discusses the individual's history. The purpose of this session is to document any event or memory which the family feels is important for understanding the individual's background. Having specific dates or names are not nearly as important in piecing together a description of the person's past as are memories, events, and feelings that the family wishes to share. While one facilitator is assisting in the discussion, the other facilitator can be documenting the information on the "Background Map". The information can be depicted with pictures, symbols, arrows, words, and colors – any way that communicates the information clearly for the family.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on Background

1 Where was the focus person born?

2 How did the focus person behave as a baby/child?

3 What were some major or memorable events that occurred in the focus person's past?

4 What did the focus person enjoy doing for fun or on vacations as a child?

5 What general memories do you have of the focus person's childhood?

6 What schools did the focus person attend?

7 What activities or subjects did the focus person enjoy in school?

2 · Relationships (Family, Friends, Service Providers)

In this second step of the personal futures planning session, the family discusses the focus persons relationships. Using a "Relationship Map", a facilitator will document the names of family members, friends, and service providers. Generally, the names of people the focus person feels closest to or with whom he or she spends the most time should be written toward the center of the circle. The purpose of this section is to create a relationship or social network map, which can help the family better understand the focus persons social relationships.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on Relationships

1 Who are the people with whom the focus person spends the most time? (These people should be placed closest to the focus person in the center of the Relationship Circle.)

2 How much time does the focus person spend with each person?

3 Who are the people the focus person feels closest to?

4 Who are the people with whom the focus person has contact on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis? (The more time spent with the focus person, the closer to the center of the Relationship Circle they are placed.)

5 Are these persons friends, family, or service providers? (They should be placed in the appropriate section of the Relation-

ship Circle.)

6 Are any animals or pets involved in the focus person's IHE?

3 · Places

In this third step of the personal futures planning session the family discusses where the focus person goes in the community. Included in this discussion are how often the focus person goes out into the community, how they get there and with whom. The facilitator can use symbols, names and arrows to create a map of places the focus person goes into the community.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information about Places the Focus Person Frequents

1 What community and neighborhood environments are frequented on a regular basis?

2 How does the focus person make choices about going to these places or participating in the setting?

3 What does the focus person do when they get to these settings?

4 Does the focus person frequent these settings alone, in small groups, or in large groups?

5 Are there places in the community where the focus person would be supported in exercising self-determination?

6 Are there places in the community where the focus person would not be supported in exercising self-determination?

7 How does the focus person get to these places, and what are the transportation issues?

8 Are the places in community or human service settings?

9 Where does the focus person go to do school work, and what kind of transportation does the person use to get there?

10 What does the focus person do at the home setting?

11 How does the focus person make choices about these activities at home?

12 How does the focus person make choices about going to these places or participating in the setting?

4 · Preferences

In this fourth section of the personal futures planning session, the family discusses the focus person's preferences, in other words, what does and doesn't work for the focus person. On one side of the "Preference Map" the facilitator will list the family's ideas about what works for the focus person, and the facilitator will list what doesn't work on the other side of the Preference Map.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on the Focus Person's Preferences

1 What type of person does the focus person find hard to get along with, or think it is hard to get along with?

2 What are the most enjoyable choices the focus person makes?

3 What are the choices the focus person makes that are the most frustrating?

4 What type of person does the focus person get along with, or think it is easy to get along with?

5 What are the things that the focus person most enjoys doing, the things that motivate and are interesting?

6 What are the things that are boring, frustrating or undesirable to the focus person?

7 What conditions, activities, and settings are most enjoyable?

8 What conditions, activities, and settings are most frustrating?

9 Are there people the focus person would like to spend less time with?

10 In what ways can positive experiences be increased and negative experiences decreased?

5 · Choices

In this section, the family discusses the choices made by the person independently, and choices made by the focus person and others. Many choices will fall into both categories, in other words, in some circumstances a choice can be made independently, and in other situations the choice is made with the help of another person. This can be indicated graphically with arrows showing that the choice falls into both categories.

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information about Choices

1 What are the choices the focus person makes independently at home?

2 What are the choices the focus person makes independently in school?

3 What are the choices the focus person makes independently regarding peers?

4 What are the choices the focus person makes together with parents at home, regarding school, or peers?

5 What are the choices the focus person makes together with their teachers regarding their education?

6 · Focus on the Future for Self-Determination Goals

In this final section of the personal futures planning session the family discusses their goals for the focus person. Families may want to use the information from the previous discussions to help formulate and organize their ideas. The focus on the future can include long and short term goals in self-determination, as well as an understanding of the supports needed for the focus person to reach these goals. The family's ideas will be documented, and if desired, prioritized on the "Focus on the Future Map".

Questions to Ask to Obtain Information on the Focus Person's Focus for the Future in Self-Determination Goals

1. What images does the focus person have for the future in self-determination?
2. What unrecognized dreams and hopes does the focus person have for the future in self-determination?
3. What supports are needed?
4. What are the creative ways to link the preferences of the focus person with the opportunities available in the community?
5. What is the family's comfort level for these goals to occur?

At the conclusion of the personal futures planning session, facilitators should indicate to the family that their discussion has provided valuable information about the focus person, and that a copy of the written document will be made for the focus person and the family to have. The information and ideas that are documented on the "Personal Futures Map" can be referred back to throughout the family's participation in the self-determination curriculum.

The Personal Futures Planning Process adapted with permission from Abery, B., et. al., (1994). *Self-determination for youth with disabilities: A family education curriculum.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

Appendix E
Transition Resources

The following resources may be useful in the transition-planning process:

Begin the Between:
Planning for the Transition from High School to Adult Life (1996)
This guide reviews basic issues on successful transition from high school to adult and community living. It provides strategies for planning and an introduction to the adult service system. Free to parents of Minnesota high school aged children and young adults with disabilities; a small fee for others. Available through PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417. 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

Community Transition Interagency Committee Yearly Summary
This is the annual report on the status of CTICs in Minnesota, compiled for the Minnesota Department of Education by the Institute on Community Integration. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

IMPACT: Feature Issue on School-to-Work and Students with Developmental Disabilities (1999)
This publication describes programs where learners with developmental and other disabilities are fully included in school-to-work activities, as well as strategies, attitudes, and policies necessary for inclusion of all learners in school-to-work. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

IMPACT: Feature Issue on Transition (1992)
This publication focuses on transition issues for young adults with disabilities. It includes articles related to transition policy, service needs, and strategies for designing effective transition programs. Profiles of students who have successfully made the transition from high school to adult life are also included. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Life Beyond the Classroom:
Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities (1996)
This book by Paul Wehman provides a comprehensive guide to planning and implementing transition services at the individual and local levels. The volume includes chapters devoted to the unique needs of youth from a number of different disability

groups. Issues relevant to interagency teaming, working with families, secondary educational program design and development, and job development are addressed in detail. Available from Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-9945, 800/638-3775.

***Rehabilitation Services: They're Working* (1995)**
This 25-minute videotape describes the services available from the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services. The referral process, eligibility criteria, individualized plan development, and other services are described. The video is available from the Division of Rehabilitation Services, 1210 East College Drive, Marshall, MN 56258, 507/537-7280.

***Speak up for Health* (1998)**
This 15-minute video is about young people who understand their health care needs, who value independence, and who speak out on their own behalf. In addition, it is about parents who recognize and support the need for knowledge and independence in the area of health care. Available from PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417, 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

***Speak up for Health: A Handbook for Parents* (1998)**
This publication focuses on preparing adolescents with chronic illness and disabilities for independence in health care. It covers topics such as letting go, self-advocacy, communicating with health care professionals, adolescent sexuality, and paying for health care. Available from PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417, 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

***Supported Employment: A Step-by-Step Guide* (1992)**
By Cathleen Urbaine, Supported Employment Project Coordinator at PACER Center. This booklet was designed to help persons with disabilities and their families obtain or improve supported employment by explaining how the adult service system works, describing some current "best practices," giving tips to help individuals access supported employment, and suggesting ways to help bring supported employment into a community. Available from PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55417, 612/827-2966 (Voice and TDD).

***Transition Policy in Minnesota – A Glance Back, A Look Ahead* (1993)**
This document is an outcome of a number of community forums conducted around the state as well as interviews with key stakeholders. Over 60 recommendations for service improvement are made at three areas of service delivery: individual, community, and state. Copies of this report can be ordered by contacting: Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Transition-Related Websites

School-to-Work Internet Gateway, School-to-Work National Office
http://www.stw.ed.gov/
This site provides information on research, evaluation, technical assistance providers, events calendar, hot topics, post and chat, school-to-work links, and more. Download the most recent School-to-Work (STW) Progress Measures Evaluation, review Gifted Education STW Models, and explore statistics, fact sheets, tools, programs, discussion and careers, young worker safety and health, and more.

The National School-to-Work Learning & Information Center
http://www.stw.ed.gov/general/general.htm
This Website is sponsored by the National School-to-Work Office and maintained by the National STW Learning & Information Center. Touted as the premier Web location for resources, news, state information, and STW events, the site offers information for anyone interested in school-to-work: new visitors, educators, parents, students, researchers, grantors, employers and partnerships.

National Center for Research in Vocational Education
http://www.ncrve.berkeley.edu/
This is the nation's largest center for research and development in work-related education. It includes full-length reports, newsletters, and digests, descriptions of programs, projects, services, and information, as well as links to other vocational education resources.

National Employer Leadership Council (NELC)
http://www.nelc.org
The NELC is a coalition of CEOs whose mission is to enhance the quality of the nation's workforce and improve the productivity and competitiveness of American businesses through work-based learning opportunities for all students. Member CEOs have pledged to sustain their own work-based learning programs and promote school-to-work issues, both within their own companies and between the business world and the general public. Alex Trotman, Chair of Ford Motor Company, is the NELC Chair.

School-to-Careers Web Guide
http://www.thomson.com/rcenters/stc/default.html
This Website is designed to facilitate distribution of School-to-Careers (STC) information to educators, students, and businesses. It includes a glossary of terms, STC catalog, curriculum guide, calendar of events, STC news, STC links, and more.

Northwest Center for Equity and Diversity (NCED)
http://www.edcc.ctc.edu/nwcenter/
The NCED is a regional resource center focused on promoting gender equity and cultural diversity in education, business, and the community. The site includes STW Mentoring Project Net-

work, Promoting Equity in STW legislation, Activities of the NW Center for Equity, Instructional Resources, and links.

National Transition Alliance (NTA)
http://www.aed.org/Transition/Alliance/NTA.html
The NTA is a partnership that unites the expertise of people within public institutions and private organizations to create bright futures for all youth transitioning from school to employment, post secondary experiences, and independent living. The site includes an overview of the NTA and its partners, products, databases, and resources.

Institute on Community Integration
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ici/
Located at the University of Minnesota, this University Affiliated Program is dedicated to improving community services and social supports for persons with developmental disabilities and their families, with an emphasis on the full inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities in all areas of community living. The Institute currently conducts over 70 research and training projects addressing disability issues across the life span. ICI's Website includes an overview of the Institute, publications catalog, reports and resource guides, projects online, and other disability-related services.

National Center to Improve Practices in Special Education
http://www.edc.org/FSC/NCIP/links.html
This national resource center seeks to improve practices in special education through technology, media, and materials. Links include technology and disability, disability resources, specific sites, special education, family and parent support, government resources, funding, universities with special education resources, and more.

US Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov/index.html
This site, sponsored by National Library of Education, provides information about offices and programs of the U.S. Department of Education, education initiatives of the President and the Secretary, full text of education reports, FAQs and fact sheets, grant and financial aid information, links to other organizations, and more.

ERIC Digests
http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/index/abtERICDIG.html
ERIC Digests are short reports on topics of prime current interest in education targeted specifically to teachers, administrators, policymakers, and other practitioners, but can be useful to the broad educational community.

US Department of Labor
http://www.dol.gov
This site provides information about the department, its agencies and programs, the laws and regulations it administers widely, media releases, labor-related data, contract and grant information, and other links related to labor issues. This site also allows for searches of topics using their search engine.

American Vocational Association
http://www.avaonline.org
This site provides information about the use of educational leadership in developing competitive work force. It also has information about legislation and such publications as *Techniques*, *School-To-Work Reporter* and *Vocational Education Weekly.*

National Career Development Association (NCDA)
http://www.uncg.edu/~ericcas2/ncda/
This site provides information to the public and to professionals interested in career development, including professional development activities, publications, research, public information, professional standards, advocacy, and more. The NCDA is sponsored by the National Career Development Association in collaboration with The ERIC Clearinghouse for counseling and student services.

Center on Education and Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison
http://www.cew.wisc.edu
This site provides information on work the center has done in identifying and responding to issues that affect the connection among education, work, community, and family. The site has information about solutions, capacity building, and technical assistance.

US Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education-OVAE
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/
This site provides information about the office of vocational and adult education, its programs, grants, what is happening and working in the field and how it can be of service to people so that states and localities will be successful in meeting the National Education Goals by the year 2000.

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities-NICHCY
http://www.nichcy.org
This site provides information on disability and disability-related issues for families, educators and other professionals.

Business Economics Education Foundation-BEEF
http://www.beef-mn.org
Over the past 22 years, the Business Economics Education Foundation (BEEF) has worked diligently to develop partnerships with businesses and organizations committed to answering com-

munity educational problems that would otherwise go unchallenged. Business professionals and educators continue to identify and provide the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare for the challenges of the workplace.

Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge–ISEEK
http://www.iseek.org/
Career options, Minnesota Job Bank openings, and college and training programs are posted or linked at this site. A link to school Websites is planned for January 1999, and a link to multiple job boards, newspaper classified ads, etc. is scheduled for June 1999. The site is developed in partnership with the Minnesota Association of Private Postsecondary Schools, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development, Minnesota Higher Education Services Office, Minnesota Office of Technology, Minnesota Private College Council, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), and the University of Minnesota. Funding provided by the Minnesota State Legislature.

Learning For Life: A Program for Education
http://www.learnforlife.org/
Learning For Life was developed to provide schools with help meeting the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 by incorporating school-based learning, connecting activities, and work-based learning. Programs start at the junior high and middle school level and extend to senior high and emphasize the areas of career opportunities, service learning, life skills, character education and leadership experience. This site features *Police Box—Teachers Resource*, and information about Life Choices, Learn For Life's interactive computer game on CD-ROM. "Learning For Life adopts a values education life skills approach and is to address contemporary social issues of particular relevance to the whole school family."

Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS)
http://cfl2.state.mn.us/mcis/about.html
MCIS is designated as Minnesota's official career information delivery system by the Minnesota Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (MOICC). MCIS collects current occupational and educational information and develops it into usable forms. Its computer programs and publications provide school and career information to students and adults involved in career planning.

Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning
http://children.state.mn.us/
This site provides information and links to a large amount of information including:
graduation standards (http://children.state.mn.us/grad/

gradhom.htm), teacher licensing (http://children.state.mn.us/licen/license.htm), youth service/youth development (http://www.mnydys.org/) and school-to-work (http://children.state.mn.us/stw/index.html).

National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC)
http://www.noicc.gov
This site offers information on job, career and labor markets; career development and counseling tools; Web-based career development library; training and professional improvement programs; occupational licensing information; and provides links to NOICC and national partners.

Minnesota Careers Online
http://www.des.state.mn.us/lmi/careers/
Minnesota Careers is a published by the Research & Statistics Office of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES). Like the print version, the *Career Information* section takes you to a listing of career clusters. Each section contains a brief description of the career, education requirements, wage ranges, and projected job outlook. *Careers by Category* details careers by different topics, such as what careers are shrinking in size, what careers pay the most, and what careers require the most education. *Selecting a Career* is an area that helps users determine which career is right for them. *Selecting a School* contains specific information on the state's technical, college, and university academic programs.

National Transition Network
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn/
The National Transition Network (NTN), housed at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), University of Minnesota, provides technical assistance and evaluation services to states with grants for Transition Systems Change and School-to-Work Implementation and Development. The general mission of NTN is to strengthen the capacity of individual states to effectively improve transition and school-to-work policies, programs, and practices as they relate to youth with disabilities. In addition to direct technical assistance to states with projects, NTN develops and disseminates a variety of policy publications and other networking activities.

Other Print Resources

Meeting the Needs of Youth with Disabilities: Handbook on Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives and Transition Students (1998)
A handbook designed for school personnel, IEP/transition team members, adult service providers, parents, and others who are involved in student-focused transition planning. The handbook is intended to serve as a resource for understanding how Supplemental Security Income (SSI) work incentives can be included in

the IEP/transition plan for students who have paid employment through a community-based vocational education program in high school. It is also useful as they begin to work or plan for further training upon graduation. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. This handbook is also published on the World Wide Web at — http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn

Meeting the Needs of Youth With Disabilities: Examples of Transition Students Utilizing Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives (1999)
This publication focuses on two of the SSI work incentives — Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE) — and uses detailed examples of each to demonstrate how students with disabilities can benefit from them when utilized during the transition planning process. Four examples are provided for the PASS and three examples are provided to illustrate the IRWE. The publication is intended for school personnel and any other individuals involved in the transition planning process for students with disabilities. It will be most effective when used in conjunction with *Meeting the Needs of Youth with Disabilities: Handbook on Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives and Transition Students.* Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Ensuring Access, Equity, and Quality for Students with Disabilities in School-to-Work Systems — A Guide to Federal Law and Policies (1999)
Developed by the Center for Law and Education and the National Transition Network, this publication can help state and local administrators to be aware of key federal legislation and policies that specifically address the participation of youth with disabilities in the full range of school-to-work opportunities. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Cost: $10.00

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Transition Requirements — A Guide for States, Districts, Schools, and Families (1999)
Jointly developed by the Western Regional Resource Center, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, and the National Transition Network, the purpose of this publication is to provide guidance to state, district, and school personnel, and to family organizations to ensure that the transition requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 are implemented appropriately for youth with disabilities. It has been designed to address all of the transition components in the federal requirements and to provide examples and suggest practices for meeting those requirements. Available Fall 1999 from the In-

stitute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Cost: TBA.

School to What?
A newsletter containing information on including all learners in school-to-work. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Call 612/624-4512 to be placed on the free subscription list.

What's Working in Transition?
A quarterly newsletter containing articles on ideas, strategies, and practices related to transition planning and youth with disabilities in Minnesota. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512. Call 612/624-4512 to be placed on the free subscription list.

National Transition Network Parent Briefs
Summaries, written for parents, of the new transition requirements of IDEA, vocational rehabilitation, and SSI. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

National Transition Network Policy Update
Summaries of policies and issues related to the transition of youth from school to adult life. Available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/624-4512.

Many of the *Parent Briefs* and *Policy Updates* are also published on the World Wide Web at: http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn.

Work-Based Learning-How to Advance Occupational Skill Development and Career Awareness for All Learners?
This manual assists partnerships to develop the work-based component of a school-to-work system. It is intended to help communities including schools, businesses, learners, parents and civic groups in the development of partnerships. It assists partnerships in the marketing of work-based learning activities, identifying work-based learning experiences and providing the standards of best practices found in successful work-based learning experiences. In addition the manual will help to increase the partnership awareness of legal considerations when implementing work-based learning activities and help connect work-based learning with educational reform efforts. For more information contact The Minnesota School-To-Work Initiative at 888/234-5120 or visit http://cfl.state.mn.us/stw.

References & Resources

References & Resources

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